

Jack Benny was known for awful violin playing, deadpan expressions and being the cheapest man on TV

In one skit, a robber threatened.

Your money or your life!

There was a very... long... pause...

Well?

Don't rush me. I'm thinking it over...

In real life, Jack Benny was a very generous man.

In the gospel reading, Jesus sternly warns,

Take care!

Be on your guard against all kinds of greed;

for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.

Comic George Carlin proclaimed

The meaning of life is trying to find a place to put your stuff

with this corollary...

***A house is just a place to keep your stuff
while you go out and get more stuff.***

Self-Storage is one fast growing real estate business in America
\$38 billion dollars a year in revenue... 50,000 facilities...

Taking up enough space to cover the entire country of Lichtenstein

It even spawned new TV shows

Storage Wars... Where people hope to get rich...

blindly buying the contents of sealed... and abandoned storage lockers.

...and...

Storage Nightmares...

where buyers show off their great buys

and see it for what it really is... ***junk!***

In the movie, *The Jerk*, Steve Martin played an amazingly dumb guy, who moved to the big city, fell in love, and struck it rich... *for a time*... Then he lost everything, including his girlfriend.

I don't need any of this. I don't need this stuff, and I don't need you. I don't need anything.

Except this ashtray.

And that's the only thing I need is this.

Just this ashtray...

The ashtray and the paddle game and that's all I need...

And this remote control.

The ashtray, the paddle game, and the remote control, and that's all I need...

And this lamp.

The ashtray, this paddle game, and the remote control, and the lamp, and that's all I need.

I don't need one other thing, not one...

Well what are you looking at?

What do you think I'm some kind of a jerk or something!

*Real Life and stuff... are **not** the same thing.*

No wonder Jesus said,

*Be on your guard against all kinds of greed;
for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.*

From our first reading from Ecclesiastes

All is Vanity!

It is an unhappy business

that God has given to human beings to be busy with.

*I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun;
and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.*

Even if you *do* manage to accumulate all the stuff you want...

You can't take it with you...

Like what we heard in Jesus' parable today...

You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you.

And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?

Several miles north of us, right on Federal Highway...

Is a *self-storage facility*... right next door... *to a cemetery*

Listen to Jesus... ***Be on your guard against greed!***

John D. Rockefeller became the first billionaire in 1916 was asked

How much wealth does it take to satisfy a person?

He replied,

Just a little bit more.

Could it be... that *wanting more*... is in our DNA?

Maybe... wanting *more*... isn't the problem...

Maybe... *what* we want... is the real issue...

In the second reading, St. Paul warned the Colossians...

***Set your minds on things that are above,
not on things that are on earth.***

The rich man in the gospel reading

Was miserable... not because of a grain shortage

but too much grain...

Reverend George Wilcox loves puns... He said

The man building the bigger barns...

had a My Grain Headache

Jesus said...

Take care!

Be on your guard against all kinds of greed.

Look around you... You don't see robber barons or corporate raiders.
You don't see slum lords or market manipulators...

You see caring people... who love God... and love each other...

So we simply dismiss this passage... because it's not relevant *to us*...

Except for that *one phrase*... ***All kinds of greed***...

Chad Hovind's book God-Onomics says...

Greed is like a termite.

It's out of sight but boring deep into our hearts.

It doesn't attract attention as it eats away at our ability to be generous.

Jesus warned us to be on our guard...

so we can assume we are already infested with greed.

If you have trouble spotting it...

Here's what it looks like

Hoarding

Is found in the heart of conscientious, disciplined, organized people.

It preys on our ability to diligently set aside savings.

Of course, this is something we should all be doing.

But hoarders believe they can't be generous with their money

until they set aside enough for a comfortable retirement.

Hoarder's are insecure about the future.

And their willingness to trust money... rather than God...

Drives them to ignore the needs of other people.

Their first responsibility... amass assets to secure a safe future.

But hoarders end up using all their resources to benefit only one person: the hoarder.

Overspending

... happens when we confuse needs... with wants...
 And the desire to have things *now*... drives us into debt...
 Better to have a high interest loan... than to save patiently

Comparison

... feeds on competition to match the lifestyle of someone else.
 It drives us to spend and keep on spending as a way to show that you are equal to a neighbor, friend, coworker, or relative. This form of greed is closely aligned with envy.

Entitlement

But greed preys on everyone...
 no matter what their net-worth statement looks like.
 When you believe the lie that abundance comes from your possessions,
 you will find greed lurking in the shadows.
 Greed lies behind a feeling of entitlement,
 the sense that someone else owes you something.
 An entitled person believes a lie:
 “I don’t have the money for it, so somebody else ought to buy it for me.
 After all, I deserve to have it—and without having to work for it.”
 This face of greed always displays a lack of gratitude
 and often reveals anger.
 Entitlement sends people on a consuming binge.
 It’s easy to accept the mistaken idea that rich people are the greedy ones.

If we... human beings... created by God... *all* share a longing ...

Maybe the problem isn't longing... but what we long *for!*

Eugene Peterson's translation of Paul's letter to the Colossians reads

So if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, *act* like it.

Pursue the things over which *Christ* presides.

Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground,
absorbed with the things right in front of you.

Look up, and be alert to what is going on *around Christ...*

That's where the action is.

See things from *his* perspective.

Your old life is dead.

Your new life, which is your *real* life...

even though invisible to spectators

is with Christ in God.

He is your life.

There's an early morning chant that's especially popular with Jesuits

*We hold a treasure
not made of gold;
In earthen vessels
wealth untold.*

*One treasure only,
the Lord the Christ
In earthen vessels*

If we truly are those earthen vessels

Then the only thing we need... we already have.