

## **Friday, March 21: Fast Car**

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<https://open.spotify.com/track/2M9ro2krNb7nr7HSprkEgo>

Tracy grew up knowing three things. One was the life she lived. The second was the life she wanted to live. The last thing she knew: the infinite gulf that stood between them.

Tracy dreamed of a life that was more: more than menial jobs, more than taking care of an alcoholic father who would never appreciate her, more than feeling like the weight of the world was on her shoulders, more than seeing life as just getting to the end of a day only to repeat the same cycles over and over. And she saw her way to that life, a way across the infinite gulf: a new man and his car.

Many of us know that difference, between the life we are living and the life of our dreams. The life of our vision boards. Or we know the difference between the selves we are and the selves we want to become.

Maybe you want to be more successful, get that promotion, take home more pay. Maybe you want a bigger house or more security for retirement. Maybe you want a job, a career that meets your passions instead of the job you're stuck in. Maybe you want to be more patient, more compassionate, more empathetic. Maybe you want to spend more time with family or finally be able to travel. There's always something, some way we know we can do better, some way we can improve. We're Americans! And Americans are nothing if not always moving forward, always trying to do more, always working to do better.

And for many of us, life has afforded us comfort and privilege such that we believe the difference between who and where we are and who and where we want to be is surmountable, is achievable. There isn't that infinite gap between us and our dreams. Many of us are able, or at least we believe we are able, to build for ourselves the lives we want. There may be obstacles in the way, but we believe we can overcome them. We believe we are one promotion, one career move, one family move, one intention away from becoming who we want to be.

Tracy does leave. She gets out of her prison of a town, out of her prison of a life and starts anew. Tracy gets a job and believes she will finally live the life she'd dreamed.

But then her partner struggles to get a job. And when he does get a job, it's one he doesn't like. Tracy notices that he is coming home from work later and later. When she inquires about where he's been, he talks about meeting up with friends at the corner bar. More and more Tracy finds that all the household tasks, chores, all the parenting tasks are falling to her. She works all day, then comes home and has to take care of the house and the children all while he gets drunk and comes home to sleep it off.

She dreamed that fast car would take her away from days spent working menial jobs and nights spent taking care of an alcoholic who cares more for the bottle than he does for her. That fast car took her out of town. But it dropped her off right into the same life she tried desperately to escape.

At some point we all have to face the fact that we can't fix our lives. We can't solve all our problems. We can't save ourselves. Our vision boards, our intentions, our goals don't save us. We can't save ourselves. We need a savior.

*In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."*

Jesus himself goes to be baptized by John. Now, Jesus did not need a baptism of repentance, he never sinned. He always walked in the way that leads to life, his life was pure holiness and righteousness. But still he walked into the water. Not for his sake, for ours.

Jesus is baptized for us and for our salvation. His repentance is for all the ways in which we have tried to save ourselves, be our own Messiahs. His repentance is for all the ways in which we believe we can make for ourselves good and perfect lives, all the ways in which we think we can make ourselves pure and holy. His baptism gives us a way to become holy and righteous. Not by living for ourselves, but by dying to ourselves.

When we are baptized, we die unto trying to be holy on our own, trying to be righteous by our works, trying to be, ourselves, enough. We die to any attempt to present ourselves before the throne worthy of God's eternity. We can't do it. So we die to any attempt to prove otherwise. And when we are baptized we are raised to life. Not to a new way of still doing our old life, not to any life of our own. We are raised into Christ's life. We are raised into Christ's righteousness. We are raised into Christ's holiness.

We become clothed with righteousness, but not our own. We are freed from our sin, but only because we, ourselves, have died to it and with it. Our life is no longer ours, it is God's in Christ.

We have a fast car. But not one that takes us from one way of living to another. One that leads to the only life that is life. One that leads to a life eternal. One that leads to Christ. Remember you are baptized and be thankful.