

In the Twinkling of an Eye

by Rolaant McKenzie



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One of the most popular episodes, called *Nothing in the Dark* (Season 3, Episode 16, 1/5/1962), in Rod Serling's famous television series *The Twilight Zone* tells the story of Wanda Dunn, a frail old woman living in a dark basement studio apartment, the last resident of an old, ramshackle tenement long vacated by her neighbors. She mostly remains isolated in her apartment because she fears Death will take her if she opens the door or goes outside. She had convinced herself that as long as she did not let Death enter her home, she would remain alive.

One cold night, Wanda is awakened by a commotion outside. Harold Beldon, a young police officer, is shot in an apparent fight with a suspect and lays in the snow just outside her door. As Wanda listens through the door, Harold cries out to her that he is dying and pleads for help. She is unable to call for emergency medical assistance because she has no phone. Wanda is initially afraid and unwilling to open the door, thinking that it is a trick by Death to let him in, but Harold's continued pleas for help prick her heart. She yields to her compassion, opens the door, helps Harold to her bed, and tends to his wounds.

Because she touched him and did not die, she believed that Harold was not Death in disguise. She shared with Harold that her initial reluctance to help him was because some time before she saw Death in the form of a man take an old woman's life by just touching her, and that she had seen him many

times with different faces.

The following morning, a man identifying himself as a building contractor pushes through the door, causing Wanda to faint in terror. When she regains consciousness, the man apologizes and explains that he is tasked with demolishing the building in an hour. He said that notice of this demolition was given some time ago and that she should have moved out long before this day. He tried to convince her that his work was necessary and good because tearing down the old, dilapidated building paves the way for new and much better dwelling spaces. He told Wanda that if she did not leave, he would have to call the police. She turns to Harold for help, but the contractor, not seeing him, leaves to call the police.

When Wanda looks in a mirror and does not see Harold's reflection, she realizes that he has come to take her from this life. With a kind smile, he tells her that he arranged the circumstances of their meeting to gain her trust and convince her that he means no harm. Wanda recoils, frightened, but Harold tells her that what she really fears is the unknown. He assures her that she has nothing to fear and that he is there to take her to a new and better life.

Harold gets up from the bed, showing no signs of injury, and gently encourages Wanda to trust him and take his hand. When she finally takes his hand, she does not realize that anything has changed until she finds herself standing over her own dead body. Then Wanda, arm in arm with Harold, walks through the door outside into the sunlight and new life.

Ever since the rebellion against God of our first parents, Adam and Eve, sin and death have become part of the fabric of this world. It is a common saying that death is a part of life, but it was not an original part of God's creation. Indeed, it is an enemy that separates us from our familiar life under the sun, our loved ones, and friends (Genesis 2:15-17; 1 Corinthians 15:26; Revelation 21:1-4). Like Wanda

Dunn, we know this instinctively, and along with the fear of the unknown, it often produces a dread of death that causes us to do everything we can to avoid it.

Charles Blondin (February 28, 1824 – February 22, 1897) was a French tightrope walker and acrobat who did exhibitions in Britain, Ireland, and the United States. His exceptional skill brought him such fame that his name became synonymous with tightrope walking.

Blondin was most famous for his tightrope walks across the Niagara Gorge on the United States-Canada border in 1859, where he walked on a 3.25-inch-thick, 1,100-foot-long rope 160 feet above the Niagara River. On one occasion, he walked across blindfolded. On another, he carried a stove midway, sat down, and cooked and ate an omelet. And yet again, he pushed a wheelbarrow.

It was on the occasion that Blondin successfully pushed the wheelbarrow that he asked for a volunteer to get into it and take a ride across the gorge. Though the amazed audience acknowledged his ability to do this and other daring feats, no one believed in it to the point of getting into the wheelbarrow. However, his manager, Harry Colcord, at another exhibition at the Niagara Gorge, climbed onto Blondin's back, and he carried him safely across the gorge.

Because Jesus bore on His back the cross, shed His blood to pay in full the penalty of our sins, and rose again as conqueror of the grave, all who climb onto His back by faith need not fear death. As Colcord trusted Blondin to carry him on the tightrope across the turbulent waters in the gorge below, even more so can we trust in Jesus, the risen Savior, to carry us safely across the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23:4) to the home He has prepared for us (John 14:1-6).

All who truly believe in Jesus and act on it by taking His hand by faith need not be terrorized by death. As Wanda's fear

was overcome and she believed Harold by taking his hand to enter, in the twinkling of an eye, the doorway to new life, so all who believe in Jesus will, when He comes for them, leave a decayed dwelling to be torn down and enter the eternal dwelling God has prepared for them in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:1-8).

“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:51-57)

The path of your life can change in the twinkling of an eye. Later today or tomorrow is not promised. Trust in Jesus today, be forgiven of all your sins, be at peace with God, and enter a new and better life in truth – eternal life.

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E-Mail Rolaant McKenzie: rolaant@gospeloutreach.net

Website: <http://www.gospeloutreach.net/>