

Why Was This Video Seen 5.2 Million Times?

Today is Asteroid Day. In case you want to join the celebration, you can watch a program on NASA TV describing how researchers find, track and characterize Near-Earth Objects.

From the skies to the seas: a video showing tourists in shallow water at a Florida beach has been seen more than 5.2 million times. Not because of the tourists, but because of the seven sharks swimming around them.

From sharks to tragedy: An aspiring YouTube star convinced his girlfriend to shoot a gun into the thick book covering his chest. He was certain that the book would stop the bullet and the video would make them famous. The bullet killed him; his girlfriend has been charged with manslaughter.

From tragedy to celebration: A baby was born on a Spirit Airlines plane traveling from Ft. Lauderdale for Dallas/Ft. Worth. The airline has awarded him free air travel for life.

You're probably wondering what these stories have to do with you today. Here's the answer: very little. Your odds of dying from a meteor, asteroid, or comet impact are one in 1,600,000. You are 17,777 times more likely to die in a car crash.

Sharks are not likely to kill you, either—falling coconuts kill fifteen times more people than sharks each year. I would guess that you're not willing to fire a gun into a book on your chest. And I could find no statistics for the number of babies born on airplanes since this happens so rarely.

Here's my point: We typically care about the news in direct proportion to its relevance to our daily lives. With the

advent of social media and digital news sources, we can limit what we see to what we want to see more fully than ever before. If a topic isn't obviously relevant to us today, it's not relevant at all.

This is an understandable way to cope with the onslaught of messages that bombard us every day. But it's exactly the wrong way to think about issues that matter most. The urgent is seldom significant, and the significant is seldom urgent.

This theme has been on my mind recently because of a petition I read in *The Valley of Vision*, a compendium of Puritan prayers. The author says of Jesus' return, "That day is no horror to me, for thy death has redeemed me, thy Spirit fills me, thy love animates me, thy Word governs me."

He knows that on that day, "Thou wilt come to raise my body from the dust, and re-unite it to my soul, by a wonderful work of infinite power and love, greater than that which bounds the oceans' waters, ebbs and flows the tides, keeps the stars in their courses and gives life to all creatures." As a result, "I triumph now in thy promises as I do in their performance."

Nothing seems less relevant to our secular culture than preparing for eternity. But on the day we die and go to Jesus or He comes for us, nothing will be more relevant. In the meantime, being ready for that day is the very best way to live each day.

One day will be our last day. What if it were today? {eoa}