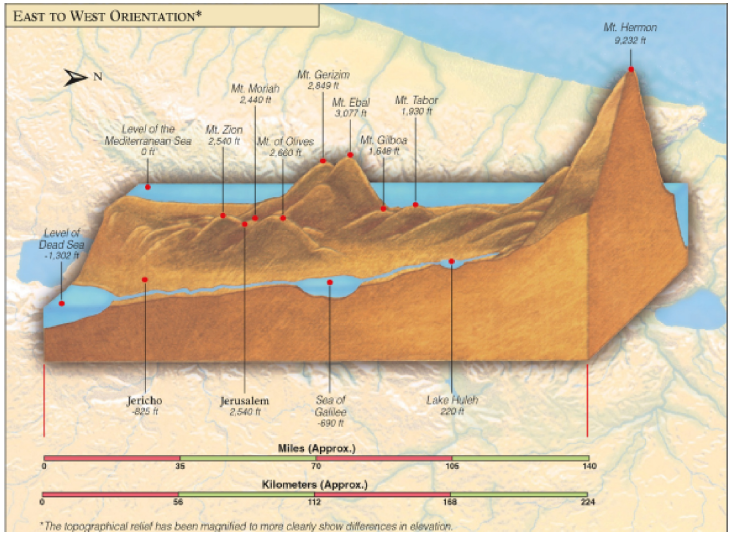
SERMON TAKE-HOME NOTES — August 2, 2026

Pastor Paul's trip of a lifetime, in June 2000:

- Six days in the Holy Land and then five days in Germany, featuring the 2000 production of the nearly 400 year-old Oberamergau Passion Play.
- Flew into Tel Aviv, on the Mediterranean coast, and the first day went up the coast, across the plain of Meggido where Nazareth is, and finally to the rim of where the Sea of Galilee is to see this site of the sea more than 1000 feet below:
- Even though I'm a map/geography geek, I had never realized this about the Sea of Galilee. I knew, as all geeks should, that the lowest point on earth is the Dead Sea in Israel at 1300 feet *below* sea level. What I hadn't put together is that the Sea of Galilee is joined to the Dead Sea by the Jordan River, only 75 miles up-stream and 600 feet in elevation from the Dead Sea. So the Sea of Galilee is still 700 feet below sea level! Here's the topography map:



- As we descended down to the Sea of Galilee, I think the temperature went up about 10 degrees, and it was quite dry. We spent a couple of days or so around the Sea of Galilee, which is where the tour guides kept warning us: never leave the bus without food and water.

So here's my question about Jesus feeding the multitude: why would so many people who lived in that space be there with Jesus that day without food and water? Or did they many of them have food and water but were afraid to share?

Reasons for being reluctant to share:

- Kosher laws dictate not only what food you can eat but also who you can eat it with. If you eat with 'unclean' people, it makes you 'unclean' (hence the Pharisees making a bid deal about who Jesus ate with, the 'sinners and tax collectors.'
- The common human perception of scarcity, that there isn't enough of what we need for all of us.

Scarcity thinking is an age-old human problem:

- It arises from the way we catch our desires from each other. Think of the children fighting over one toy in a room full of toys. Since they catch their desire for that toy from each other, they perceive that toy to be scarce.
- It's no different for adults, but the things we perceive as scarce get more abstract: wealth, power, prestige, knowledge.. It's even represented in the story of falling into sin in Genesis 3. The serpent convinces the woman and man that knwledge is scarce and God is holding out on them. The fruit is desirable because it represents that scarce knowledge.

Jesus came to teach us that reality is actuality quite different. God created the world very good, with an abundance of what we need. The main difference between scarcity-thinking and abundance-thinking, then, is *whom* we choose as our model for desiring. Choose Jesus! Who wasn't afraid to give even his life, trusting in an abundance of even God's power of life. He models it every week for us in a meal: Here's my body given for you. My blood poured out for you.

Remember last week's word *synergy*, "work with":

- Scarcity-thinking = we work against each other for scarce resources
- Abundance-thinking = we work with each other to enjoy abundance