

Talking **Dirty**

Matthew 12-13

Think it over

Why does Jesus teach in “parables”?

Introduction

The Old Testament has warned that the arrival of the Kingdom of the Messiah will divide Israel. The line will be clear between those who accept him and those who don't. And so far in Matthew's gospel, that's exactly what's been happening. While many are listening to the words of Jesus, the Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law are becoming increasingly furious.

Preparation

Before your growth group meets, **read through Matthew 12.**

From Matthew 12, what are the Pharisees and Law-Teachers concluding about Jesus? (eg v 14,24)

According to verse 18, what is *God's* opinion of Jesus?

According to verse 18 and 21, how will “*the nations*” respond to Jesus?

Parables and Puzzles

If you're familiar with the parables, you probably think they're designed to make the teaching of Jesus “interesting” or “easy to understand.” But the funny thing is, they're actually more like frustrating riddles. Like Jesus himself, the parables are easily dismissed - and they sift out those who really want to know him.

The Parable of the Sower

Read the parable (Matthew 13v3-9) and then Jesus' interpretation of it, (verses 18 - 23) and share your thoughts on the following....

a) What is the seed?

How would you have known this if Jesus didn't explain it?

b) What are the four types of soil?

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

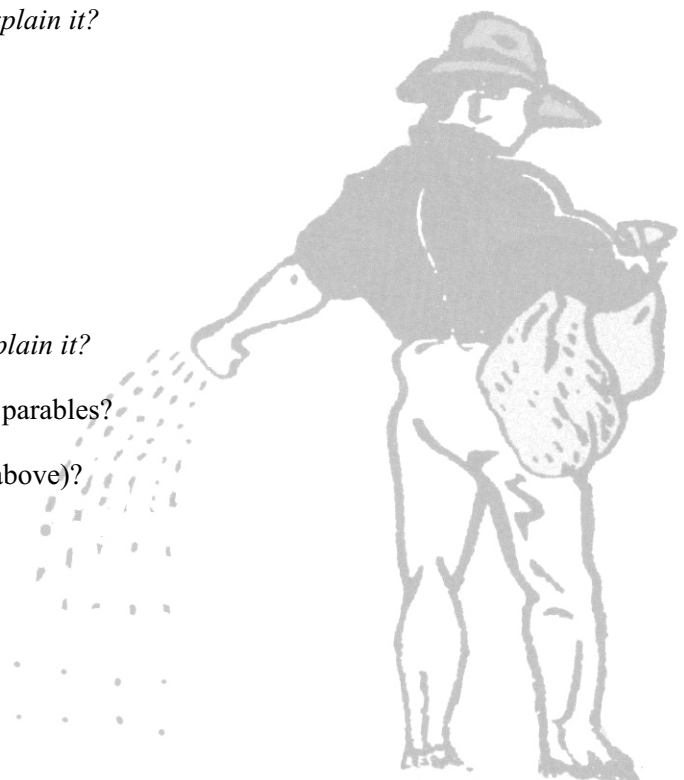
Could you have worked this out if Jesus didn't explain it?

c) From verses 10 to 17, why does *Jesus* say he speaks in parables?

How does this differ from your original answer (above)?

How does Jesus describe the people of Israel?

How do parables work?



- d. In what way is the parable of the soils a “parable about parables”?
- e. What warning should we take from the parable of the soils?
- f. What dangers does the parable warn of for those who have at least started to listen to the Word?

The Parable of the Weeds

Read the *parable of the weeds* (verses 24 - 30)

- a. In the context of chapter 12, who do you think are *the weeds* Jesus speaks of?
- b. If the weeds are in fact people like the *Pharisees* and *teachers of the law*, where is Jesus suggesting they come from?
- c. Read Jesus' interpretation of the parable in verses 36 -43.

Compare it - if you like - with the final chapter of Malachi in the Old Testament.
You really don't have to do this bit if you're running short of time! Truly!

- d. What future does Jesus say faces those who oppose his rule?

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Read verses 31 - 32. What encouragement would the few real disciples of Jesus get from this parable?

What warning does this parable hold for those who say the kingdom is “unimpressive”?

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

Read verses 44 - 46. Deciding to follow Jesus often comes at a cost. What costs has Jesus already warned his disciples of?

The Parable of the Fishing Net

Which other parable is this similar to?

Jesus Mother And Brothers

Interestingly, the section of parables starts and ends with a comment on the *mother and brothers* of Jesus. (Any idea what point is being made??)

How did Jesus “home crowd” respond to him, and why?

How does this confirm the truth of his parables?

What have YOU done with what you have heard of “the word”?

How do reactions to Jesus today compare with the range of reactions you've seen? How do these chapters reassure you in the midst of varied responses?

What soil are YOU? Why - and what do you plan to do about it?

