Several years ago, I heard the testimony of a woman who was lost.

She made the woman at the well look like a saint.

“I knew I needed Jesus,” she said, “but I thought I was too toxic for the church.”

Titus was written to just such a culture.

“Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.” – Titus 1:12

How does a church minister to people who are toxic?

I. Toxic People Need to Hear About the Faith That Is Able to Make Them Special (1:1a)

The point only makes sense if we remember the people Paul has in mind.

How does one get from lost to “elect”?

If any of your people – Hebrew men or women – sell themselves to you and serve you six years, in the seventh year you must let them go free. And when you release them, do not send them away empty-handed. Supply them liberally from your flock, your threshing floor, and your winepress. Give to them as the Lord your God has blessed you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today.

But if your servant says to you, “I do not want to leave you,” because he loves you and your family and is well off with you, then take an awl and push it through his ear lobe into the door, and he will become your servant for life. Do the same for your female servant. – Deuteronomy 15:12-17

The way to get from being lost to being elect is by faith. Toxic people need to hear that.

II. Toxic People Need a Hope That Is Bigger Than Life (1:2)

“I was not, I was, I am not, I care not.”

That’s where many toxic people are today. They think what they have is the best they can expect.

Contrast that with the story of the woman who had been diagnosed with cancer.

At the funeral, as people walked by the woman’s casket, they saw the pretty dress she was wearing, her Bible in one hand, and a fork in the other. Over and over they asked, “What’s with the fork?”

That’s the kind of question we are trying to get toxic people to ask.

III. Toxic People Need Grace that Refuses to Leave Jesus Out (4)

The grace and salvation we offer is not just the Father’s. It comes from Jesus too. Why is that important?

“God was pleased . . . through him to reconcile to himself all things . . . by making peace through his blood shed on the cross” – Colossians. 1:19-20

Toxic people need the whole story.

CONCLUSION

Who is the most toxic person you know?

If we’re truthful, we would probably admit that we’re all toxic people.

We all need . . . 
• A faith that enables us to be one of God’s special people
• A hope that’s bigger than life
• Grace that refuses to leave Jesus out