

**“Healthy but Dying Churches”**  
Various Scripture  
*Guest Speaker, Pastor Anton Van Straaten*

**I. Introduction**

**A. The Type of Love that defines the church is  
Romans 12:9-10:**

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.  
Romans 12:9-10

• Love free of hypocrisy—saints devoted to one another

**B. The Trademark of the Living church is John 3:35:**

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”  
John 3:35

**C. The Truth is the pillar of the Living church:**

If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.  
1 Timothy 3:15

• The church of the living God is the pillar and support of the truth.

**Notes:**

**II. Lesson: Three types of churches**

I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. But you have this in your favor: you hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.  
Revelation 2:2-7

**A. The first church:**

- Loved the truth more than people—Legalistic

B. The second church:

- Loved people more than truth—Libertarian

C. The third church:

- Loved people because of the truth—Living

Notes:

### III. The Love/Truth Paradox

A. True love obeys the truth.

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome... 1 John 5:2-3

B. Truth for the purpose of love.

The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 1 Timothy 1:5

C. Salvation insures brotherly love.

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. 1 Peter 1:22

**“They still proclaimed the truth, but no longer passionately loved him who is the truth. They still performed good deeds, but no longer out of love, brotherhood and compassion. They preserved the truth, and witnessed courageously (about it), but forgot that Love is the greatest witness to the truth.”**

Dr. D. A. Carson

**Application:** Never forget that **Love** is the greatest witness to the truth.

Notes: