



October 25, 2026

KNOW IT!

We often live weighed down by guilt, shame, and the feeling that we're never good enough. But Romans 3 reminds us that God's love isn't something we earn—it's a gift of grace, freely given through Jesus Christ. As Martin Luther discovered, God's grace sets us free from fear and transforms us from the inside out. This Reformation Sunday, we're invited to stop living in the grip of sin and shame and start living in the grip of God's amazing grace, knowing we are loved, forgiven, and forever part of God's family.

READ IT!

- Ephesians 2:4–10 — Saved by Grace. Even when we are caught in sin and unable to save ourselves, God makes us alive through Christ. Salvation is God's gift, not something we earn through good works. This is perhaps the strongest companion reading to Romans 3.
- Luke 15:11–32 — The Parable of the Prodigal Son. A son who has squandered his inheritance returns home expecting to be treated as a servant, but his father welcomes him with extravagant love and celebration. It is a powerful picture of grace: God welcomes us home before we can prove ourselves worthy.
- Romans 5:1–8 — Grace for the Undeserving. Paul reminds us that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. God doesn't wait for us to become worthy of love; God demonstrates that love precisely when we need it most.
- Les Misérables — Victor Hugo. After years of imprisonment, Jean Valjean is shown unexpected mercy by a bishop who refuses to condemn him for stealing silver. That undeserved kindness becomes the turning point in Valjean's life, inspiring him to become a compassionate and generous man. It beautifully illustrates the sermon's central point: the experience of grace changes people.
- The Hound of Heaven — Francis Thompson. This famous poem portrays a person fleeing from God, only to discover that God persistently pursues him in love. Its image of divine pursuit

resonates with the idea that we are held by grace even when we struggle to recognize or accept it. It is especially fitting for the sermon's image of being held in God's grip.

WATCH IT!

- **Les Misérables (2012):** A former prisoner experiences unexpected mercy that transforms his life, inspiring him to show compassion and grace to others.
- **It's a Wonderful Life (1946):** A man discovers his worth and the profound impact his life has had on others, even when he struggles to see his own value.
- **The Chosen (TV series):** Jesus welcomes people who are rejected or considered unworthy, offering them love, forgiveness, and a new identity.
- **Modern Parables: Prodigal Sons (Video Bible Study):** A contemporary exploration of Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, highlighting forgiveness, unconditional love, and the grace of being welcomed home.

LIVE IT!

- **Begin Each Day with Grace.** Before checking your phone or worrying about what you need to accomplish, take one minute to remember that God loves you—not because of what you achieve, but because you are God's beloved child. Pray: "God, help me live today knowing I am loved, forgiven, and free through Jesus Christ."
- **Practice Giving Others the Grace You Have Received.** When someone disappoints, frustrates, or hurts you, pause before reacting. Ask yourself, "How can I respond with mercy instead of judgment?" Look for one opportunity each day to offer forgiveness, encouragement, patience, or a second chance without expecting anything in return.
- **Replace Shame with God's Truth.** When you make a mistake or feel unworthy, resist the temptation to define yourself by your failures. Reflect on Romans 3:23–24 or Ephesians 2:8–10, remembering that everyone falls short and that salvation is God's gift of grace. Confess what needs to be confessed, make amends where possible, and then move forward in the freedom of God's forgiveness.
- **The goal:** Don't just believe in God's grace as an idea. Receive it daily, extend it generously, and let it change the way you see yourself and treat others.