

# The Treading of Grapes

Valley Center Seventh-day Adventist Church

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*The notes (Presentation Page xx) are a reference to the Presentation version of this sermon.*

*You may download the presentation version of the sermon (also in PDF) and view the visual aids that go along with this written sermon.*

(Presentation Page 1) Years ago a lady wished to publish a book on How to be a Christian. The materials were gathered and the chapters assembled. Important topics were covered, such as the "Sinner's Need of Christ," "Repentance," "Confession" and "Consecration." The book seemed complete, addressing all the necessary steps to becoming a follower of the Lord. But then she was told, "No, the book is not yet finished. There needs to be another chapter; it needs to be the very first chapter of all. You need to include a beginning chapter on "God's love for man."

(Presentation Page 2) When this was added, the book Steps to Christ was printed, which has gone on to become one of the world's best books on How to become a Christian.

(Presentation Page 3) God's love is the beginning point of our religion, the starting point of our faith. "We love because He first loved us." I John 4:19. The theme of the King Who left His throne and came to this lonely rebellious planet, risking all to save this speck of world, is an inexhaustible theme, one which will occupy the minds and thrill the hearts of the redeemed throughout eternity.

(Presentation Page 4) Jesus, the Creator God, is the One Who spoke this world into existence. "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." John 1:3.

(Presentation Page 5) Through His divine word, energy was converted into matter and "the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." Hebrews 11:3. All things were created by His dynamic voice.

(Presentation Page 6) "By the word of the LORD (notice, with all letters capitalized, this is speaking of Jehovah) were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. (Presentation Page 7) For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:6, 9.

(Presentation Page 8) This was the formula for the creation of all things, except the creation of mankind. He did not speak Adam into existence. Instead, applying a loving and personal touch, He shaped with His own hands the form of His son Adam, and then kissed life into him by breathing the breath of life into his nostrils. This distinction in the manner of creation sets mankind apart from all the rest of creation. This personal touch; this special and intimate involvement in the creation of mankind speaks to His unlimited love and devotion. The personal touch is what makes the difference.

(Presentation Page 9) There is another personal touch of which we would speak today. It is in an opposite direction. It has something to do with what we celebrate today in the drinking of the cup, the grape juice which is the divinely appointed reminder of Christ's death and sacrifice. Just

as a loving Creator's hand was used in the creation of mankind, so there is a "personal touch" in the story of sin, the marring of God's perfect and beautiful creation.

(Presentation Page 10) Though warned by God of an evil rebel, Eve was seduced into temptation and then was used by the devil as his agent in bringing transgression upon Adam. The story of sin was thus written, with chapter after chapter depicting the sorrow and woe that came through that costly and tragic mistake. But God, because of His great love, would not allow the story to end that way. He would take upon Himself the reproach and punishment and provide a means by which mankind could again be restored to the image of God and to the Garden of delight.

(Presentation Page 11) It would be a costly, expensive undertaking. It would mean that God would have to step down and become a part of the human race, setting aside His divinity and allowing Himself to be tried and tempted as a man. At this prospect Satan rejoiced, for by this time he had had centuries of experience in perfecting his snares. He exulted that he would have no trouble at all in leading the Son of God into temptation. But to the devil's surprise, Jesus never faltered. His obedience would lead Him up the path of sorrows to Golgotha, yet He would with unflinching faith walk the path of duty.

(Presentation Page 12) The sacrifice He would give would be made more ugly by the involvement, the personal touch of those He had come to save. It was human voices that clamored for His crucifixion. (Presentation Page 13) It was human hands that pressed a cruel crown of thorns upon His gentle brow. (Presentation Page 14) It was human hands that nailed Him to the tree, human hands that thrust the sword into His side. But this sacrifice Jesus was willing to give, "even the death of the cross," so that mankind could be saved.

(Presentation Page 15) As a token of this great sacrifice, He gave to us the reminder of the cup. The grape juice which it contains recalls the blood He shed (Presentation Page 16), both in the Garden as He sweat drops of blood under the stress and the weight of our sins; (Presentation Page 17) in the courtyard as He was whipped with the deadly Roman thong; (Presentation Page 18) in the judgment hall as the crown of thorns were embedded on His unresisting head and (Presentation Page 19) finally at Calvary, when the nails were driven into His hands and feet. This blood would represent His life given fully and completely in our behalf for salvation. (Presentation Page 20) "The life is in the blood." Leviticus 17:11.

How is grape juice produced? There's really only way that it was done through many, many centuries. By what means were grapes crushed? It was by the treading of human feet.

(Presentation Page 21) "He will give a shout, as those who tread the grapes." Jeremiah 25:30. From the days of Job, one of the first books of the Bible to be written, it was this way. Job 24:11. Grain was processed by the treading of animals. Grapes were crushed by human feet, even until recent times. Is there not a lesson here? Here where we live, near Escondido, there is a park which bears the name Grape Day Park. It recalls years past, when the vintage would be harvested and the crush would be celebrated. I wonder if many people today have any perception of the history, the heritage of this park.

More importantly, do we have any conception of the lesson of the grape juice and how it was produced as it reflects the story of sin and salvation, wrapped in the cover of God's love. (Presentation Page 22) A personal touch brought Adam to life, different than all the rest of creation. (Presentation Page 23) A personal touch brought about the death of the One Who gave life, pictured in the trampling of the grapes. We needn't look to Adam to point a finger of guilt; we needn't look to the Sanhedrin who condemned Him nor the soldier who drove the nails. We are guilty of the blood of the Savior. Your feet and mine were there in that winepress. We are there, "trampling on the blood" every time we choose to go our own way. The picture is particularly repugnant in that it is with the feet that grapes are crushed. When we "transgress" (which means to walk across or trample), we tread the blood of our dear Savior.

(Presentation Page 24) Yet today He still offers us forgiveness. Even for those who drove the spikes He prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." So it is true also for us. Though we have shamed Him; though we have done despite to His Spirit of grace and trampled upon the precious blood of the covenant, He invites us today to receive Him; to acknowledge that we are sinners in need of salvation; to allow His love to melt our hardened hearts and renew us in His likeness.

When you drink of the cup today, think of how, at least until recent times, grape juice was produced. See in the image of the treading of grapes your "personal touch" in the death of the Savior. But also see His unrelenting love, seeking to restore that which was lost. God's love is the beginning and ending of our relationship with Him.