



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Community Group Material:

Bible Reading: John 12:23-43

23 Jesus replied..., “The hour has come for *the Son of Man to be glorified*.²⁴ Truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces much fruit.” (12:23-24) 27 “Now my soul is troubled. What should I say—Father, save me from this hour? But that is why I came to this hour.²⁸ Father, *glorify* your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have *glorified* it, and I will *glorify* it again.” 29 The crowd standing there heard it and said it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” 30 Jesus responded, “This voice came, not for me, but for you.³¹ Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out.³² As for me, *if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself*.”³³ He said this to indicate what kind of death he was about to die.³⁴ Then the crowd replied to him, “We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever. So *how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’?* Who is this Son of Man?” (12:27-34) 37 Even though he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him.³⁸ This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet...: ‘Lord, who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ...⁴¹ Isaiah said these things because he saw his *glory* and spoke about him.⁴² Nevertheless, many did believe in him even among the rulers, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, so that they would not be banned from the synagogue.⁴³ For they loved human praise more than praise from God. (12:37-38, 41-43 CSB)

SUMMARY:

- In John's Gospel, the crucifixion paradoxically symbolizes Jesus' glorification. The cross is a means of exalting Jesus, despite being an instrument of capital punishment; that claim is akin to someone 'enthroned' on an electric chair. John's distinctive concept of glory provides the key to

unlocking this enigma; glory is not a deity's visible splendor but a profound manifestation of God's character.

- That's why John differs from the Synoptic Gospels, omitting the transfiguration and apocalyptic prophecies. Instead, John emphasizes the cross as the ultimate revelation of God's boundless love for humanity. This revelation glorifies God the Father and exalts Jesus, God's Son.
- Can we become a 'Johannine Church'? Embracing John's view means valuing insights into God's nature over sensational heavenly visions, and abiding in Christ rather than obsessing over global events and end-time prophecies. John encourages us to see beyond the agony and shame of Christ's Passion, grasping its profound unveiling of divine love. Thus, we experience the transformative power of God's love in our daily lives and gain a fresh perspective on Christ's crucifixion.

QUESTIONS:

1. A few days before his crucifixion, Jesus declared "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (12:23) Why is this statement a 'paradox' – an apparent contradiction? Discuss.
2. 2 Peter's transfiguration account says: Jesus "received honor & *glory* from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I'm well-pleased!'" (2 Pet. 1:17-18). Is the concept of 'glory' here the same as that of John? What (if any) are the differences? Discuss.
3. Consider this saying: "*Through Jesus' death on the cross, God's glory is supremely revealed.*" Do you agree/disagree?
4. In several places Jesus talks about the "Son of Man" being "lifted up" (3:14; 8:28; 12:32) Does Jesus mean:
 - a. Lifted up on (onto) the cross?
 - b. Lifted up (exalted) to the heavens?
 - c. both a. & b.? Discuss.
 - d. Is the phrase "lifted up" (as used by John) a paradox (puzzle)? In what sense? Discuss.
5. Apostle Paul uses the (Greek) verb '*exalt (lift up)*' to describe Jesus' exaltation (resurrection, ascension) following his death (Phil. 2:9 '*highly exalted*'). How does John's use of this term '*exalt/lifted up*' differ from Paul's use?
6. John's Gospel differs from the other 3 Gospels in that it omits Jesus' transfiguration & lacks the Synoptics' end-time signs/prophecies (e.g., Mk. 13). What factors might explain John's omissions? What implications might we draw?
7. The question was posed: "Can we be a 'Johannine Church'?"
 - a. What would a "Johannine Church" look like?
 - b. What would be *emphasized* by a "Johannine Church"?
 - c. What would be *de-emphasized*?