

# Seventh Sunday of Easter

## COMPLETELY ONE

John 17:20-26

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## Analysis by Paul Jaster

20I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, 21that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

25Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. 26I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

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## DIAGNOSIS: Painfully Fractured

**Step 1: Initial diagnosis (External Problem) :** *Fractured*

We live in a world that is frightfully divided. If the world were a body (which it is), the presenting symptoms to Dr. House (a television drama starring Hugh Laurie) would be multiple fractures, concussions and contusions of every kind, with

internal and external bleeding. The Gospel of John describes such wounds—sharp divisions—as the social world to which John speaks. All of us sense the fractures and the brokenness. The lack of love. The violent competitiveness and glory seeking. And yet, most just think that we are basically whole with God and that the problem lies with someone else. Give Dr. Gregory House this credit: he knows that he is maimed and pained and frightfully divided from all those around him. But, to him those around him are “idiots.” Another divisive word we use.

**Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) :** *Divided from God*  
The grist of post-modern medical dramas (the fractures in our physiological and social world) are indicative of a more primary fracture in the spiritual realm: We are divided from God. And if we are not “at one with God,” then there is no way we can be at one with one another. For God is love, that is the “heart” of the matter. And cut off from the heart, other parts of the body die. That’s why it is so painful to watch House on TV. His genius may save lives, but his mockery of God is brutal on him and everyone in his social orbit. And so, Dr. House discharges patched up bodies, but battered souls. That is the big difference between House and Jesus.

**Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) :** *Weighed Down*  
In both Hebrew and Greek, the word “glory” means “weight.” It is a reference to the amount of booty won in battle. The more “glorious” you are in battle, the more booty you get in weight. The problem with that kind of glory (our kind of glory vs. God’s kind of glory) is that it weighs us down and crushes us under that weight—eternally. The root cause of our divisions is our faithless desire to gain more “glory,” more weight, more standing for ourselves, at the expense of others. There is even a “religious” type of glory-seeking where we seek signs to demonstrate that God loves us more than others (which is the desire of the Judeans in the first half of John’s Gospel). But

there is a law (call it natural/medical, social/interpersonal, divine/theological) that such a weight first fractures and splinters a body and then, finally, crushes it to death eternally. House may be a glorious genius as a medical diagnostician, but that glory paired with his callous disregard for humanity is killing him so rapidly and painfully that he must pop pills like candy to take the agony away.

## **PROGNOSIS: Gloriously Complete**

### **Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *Lifted Up***

Jesus is sent by God to seek and to gain a different kind of glory (the second half of John's Gospel). Twice in this short portion of Jesus' high priestly prayer Jesus refers to that different kind of glory as "the glory that you have given me." This is NOT a faithless desire of the part of Jesus to gain more "glory" for himself at the expense of others. Rather it is a faithful desire on the part of Jesus to expend himself for the sake of others. In short, it is love. This is that agape love which is THE powerful, embodied expression of God's own intense love for us from the foundation of the world. It's God's love in action, you might say. Thus, it is not a crushing weighing down (our kind of glory), but a healing lifting up (God's kind of glory). John's controlling image is a cruciformed caduceus: "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3:14). The AMA uses the former as their sign of healing (Asclepius's caduceus); Christians use the latter, the cross of Jesus Christ. This is very revealing. For all of medicine is just another expression of the law of Moses and the limits of our mortality. But, the cross lifts up our eyes to a glorious life that comes despite all that happens to the body now.

**Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) : *At One with God***  
Dr. House divides people in his healing. What kind of holistic

medicine is that? And he frequently calls upon his patients and colleagues to question their faith in God. In his bitter suffering he distances himself from God and leads his colleagues and patients in the same direction. But Jesus does the opposite. Jesus, too, subjects himself to the radical surgery of the cross; he undergoes the fullness of human pain and suffering. Yet he does not pop pills to take the pain away, nor does he deny the seriousness of his disease. Rather, in complete oneness with the Father's will, he embraces the suffering while still embracing God and all of humanity. And by that act he effects a great atonement (at-one-ment). The cross effects a way for us to be "at one" with God by being "at one" with the Jesus who is "at one" with God. In a single word, that way is "faith," which for John is hardly ever a noun, but almost always a verb—the very active believing in the Gospel word—and which for John is far better than glory-seeking signs.

**Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) :** *Completely Whole*  
Such self-expending glory causes a chain reaction (which is what makes this highly priestly prayer simple and yet so complicated, so complex and yet so seamless). Jesus is sent by God to be lifted up on the cross as the ultimate enactment of God's love from the foundation of the world. The cross is not a "sign" but the very thing itself—which is why "signs" are no longer needed, but only the Gospel word and witness. Jesus is totally at one with God. Faith in the Gospel Word proclaimed makes us "at one" with Jesus. Being "at one" with Jesus simultaneous makes us "at one" with God and all others and also loving toward others the way that God through Jesus is loving towards us. This is holistic healing in its most comprehensive form. You will never see this healing happen in a TV episode of "House." But, you will see it daily in a church near you where the Gospel is spoken and proclaimed, believed, heard and lived. This is precisely what Jesus prayed before he died. And it is what Jesus

continues to pray since his death and resurrection. And so far in every episode that we have seen, what Jesus prays happens! Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!