

1 Corinthians 6:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

Analysis

I speak to your shame. Pros entropēn hymin legō (πρὸς ἐντροπὴν ὑμῖν λέγω)—Paul abandons subtlety. Entropē (ἐντροπή, 'shame') signals moral failure, not just error. His rhetorical questions pile up: **Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you?** This devastates a church proud of sophia (σοφία, 'wisdom') (1:17-2:16). Not even **one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?** (diakrinai ana meson tou adelphou autou, διακρίναι ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ).

The irony scalds: they claim special gnōsis (knowledge), divide over favorite teachers (1:12, 3:4), boast of spiritual maturity—yet cannot find one wise mediator? Their 'wisdom' is performance without substance. True wisdom would preserve adelphos (ἀδελφός, 'brother') relationships, but they'd rather win lawsuits than maintain family bonds.

Historical Context

Corinth boasted philosophical schools, rhetoric teachers, and intellectual culture. The church absorbed this competitive sophistry—wisdom as social capital, not communal discernment. Paul earlier deconstructed worldly wisdom (1:18-25: the cross as foolishness). Now he shows the practical failure: their vaunted wisdom can't mediate a property dispute. Shame culture pervaded the ancient world—public exposure was devastating.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What reputation for wisdom or spirituality do you cultivate while failing at basic Christian practices like reconciliation?
2. How can churches identify and equip wise mediators to settle disputes before they escalate?
3. When has pride in your theological knowledge prevented you from pursuing humble peacemaking with a fellow believer?

Interlinear Text

πρὸς	ἐντροπήν	ὑμῖν	λέγω	οὕτως	οὐκ	ἐστὶν	ἐν
shame	G1791	to your	I speak	Is it so	is not	that there	among
G4314		G5213	G3004	G3779	G3756	G2076	G1722
ὑμῖν	σοφὸς	οὐδὲ	εἷς, ὃς	δυνήσεται	διακρίναι	ἀνὰ	
to your	a wise man	no not	one that	shall be able	to judge	between	
G5213	G4680	G3761	G1520 G3739	G1410	G1252	G303	
μέσον	τοῦ	ἀδελφοῦ	αὐτοῦ;				
G3319	G3588	brethren	G846				
		G80					

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 4:14 (Parallel theme): I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

1 Corinthians 15:34 (Parallel theme): Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

