

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 ἐντροπὴν ὑμῖν λέγω οὕτως οὐκ ἔστιν 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, ὅς δυνήσεται διακρῖναι 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.

