**By What Authority (4) – The Doctrine of Expediency**

*Luke 20:1-8*

Introduction

1. The question posed by the Jewish leaders to Jesus shows the importance of authority – **Luke 20:1-8**
   1. Previously:
      1. **The Need for Authority** – implied by their question, and Jesus’ response.
         1. Need for authority shown – secular, biblical history, inherent within conversion, no authority = sin.
      2. **The Source of Authority** – implied by their question, and Jesus’ response.
         1. Improper sources of authority demonstrated – from men.
         2. Proper source of authority demonstrated – God, Christ, HS through apostles, written word.
      3. **Establishing Authority** – implied by their question (Jesus must be able to demonstrate), and reasoning to Jesus’ response regarding John the baptizer (John evidently demonstrated to others) is the ability to demonstrate authority.
         1. Command, Example, Necessary Inference – an inspired hermeneutic.
   2. As a subpoint to the general consideration of establishing authority is the understanding of the dual nature of authority, and where matters of expediency fall.
2. **Expediency –** “(1) the quality or state of being suited to the end in view…(4) a means of achieving a particular end” (Merriam-Webster).
   1. **1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23** ***(“helpful”*** – ***“expedient,”*** KJV, ASV) – *sympherō* – “to bring together,” (sun, “with,” phero, “to bring”), (VINE)
      1. “(1.) with a reference to the object, to bring together: τί, **(Acts 19:19**). **(2.) with a reference to the subject, ‘to bear together or at the same time; to carry with other's; to collect or contribute in order to help, hence, to help, be profitable, be expedient (2 Corinthians 8:10 – advice/exhortation helpful to them; John 11:50 – Jesus dying helpful to nation)’”** (Thayer).
   2. NOTE: There is a negative connotation given to the term due to its being used dishonestly.
      1. “the quality of being convenient and practical despite possibly being improper or immoral; convenience: *an act of political expediency*.” (New Oxford American Dictionary)
      2. **Similar as a justification for religious practices devoid of authority.**
3. When seeking to obey, and abide in the authority of Christ, what areas are we at liberty to make judgments, and what constitutes an expediency?
4. Two Natures of Authority – Generic and Specific
5. Misunderstandings
   1. For a thing to be authorized it must be specifically mentioned.
   2. Because we do a lot of things in ways not mentioned specifically in scripture, we are doing them without authority – conclusion, we don’t have to have authority for everything.
   3. For a thing to be prohibited it must be specifically excluded – conclusion, everything scripture does not specifically forbid is authorized.
6. The Dual Nature of Authority
   1. **Generic (inclusive)** – Anything required or authorized by God includes the authority for whatever is necessary, incidental, or expedient in fulfilling the authorized action within that class.
   2. **Specific (exclusive)** – Anything specified in the requirement or authorized action necessarily excludes all other things within that class.
   3. **Implications:**
      1. A thing may be authorized even though it is not specifically mentioned. (Generic – inclusive).
      2. A thing may be unauthorized even though it is not specifically prohibited. (Specific – exclusive).
   4. Examples of Generic and Specific authority:
      1. **Generic authority including:**
         1. Water of Purification – **Numbers 19:2 (cf. Hebrews 9:13; 10:22)** – says nothing of the size of the animal (height, weight).
         2. Passover Lamb – **Exodus 12:5** – it must be without blemish, but no specific instruction on how to preserve it as such for the occasion. (Methods of keeping the livestock safe.)
         3. Great Commission – **Matthew 28:18-20 –** says ***“Go,”*** but not how. (Method of transportation.)
            1. ***“Teach”*** – how? (Private, Public, Class)
      2. **Specific authority excluding:**
         1. Water of Purification – **Numbers 19:2** – red heifer, without blemish, no yoke. (Not another animal, color, not some blemish, not some work, etc.)
         2. Passover Lamb – **Exodus 12:5** – lamb, without blemish, male, 1 yr old. (Not another animal, not some blemish, not female, not different age.)
         3. Great Commission – **Matthew 28:18-20** – baptizing, by authority of Jesus, teaching the Lord’s commands. (Not sprinkling, not by authority of denomination, not teaching of man’s creed.)
   5. Such helps us understand what the scripture teaches on the nature of expediencies.
7. The Doctrine of Expediency – Aid or Addition?
8. Defined (again)
   1. “(1) the quality or state of being suited to the end in view…(4) a means of achieving a particular end” (Merriam-Webster).
   2. There is an end in view – the end result must not be different than what is required or authorized.
   3. OTHERWISE, IT WAS NOT AN EXPEDIENCY, BUT A HINDRANCE TO PRODUCING THE INTENDED END.
9. An Expediency Must Be Lawful
   1. **1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23** – implied, only lawful things can be considered expediencies, but not all lawful things are expediencies.
      1. ***“All things”*** – is limited in context by “lawful” – all things that are lawful are lawful, but not necessarily expedient.
         1. **1 Corinthians 6:12-13** – shows itself not to be a blanket statement – sexual immorality is not lawful.
      2. Logic – the goal is to fulfill the law, but if your “expediency” constitutes a transgression of law through unauthorized practice it was not truly expedient toward that end.
   2. Example in baptism:
      1. **Mark 16:16** – baptism for salvation – transliteration – *baptizō* – to immerse, submerge (STRONG)
      2. Circa 253 AD – Novatian, a man on his deathbed, desires to be baptized recognizing its necessity for salvation. Permitted by local “bishop” to pour water about him instead. Such became an accommodation for certain circumstances, and eventually the norm.
      3. Was pouring an expediency for fulfilling the command of baptism?
         1. Was pouring helpful for accomplishing immersion, or submersion?
         2. NO – it did the opposite of fulfilling command.
      4. Something unlawful cannot be an expediency.
10. An Expediency Cannot be Specified
    1. By nature, expediencies fall within the realm of generic authority.
       1. They are HELPFUL things for carrying out what is specifically required or authorized.
    2. When something is specified, it is not merely helpful, but demanded:
       1. Moses and the Tabernacle – **Exodus 25:1-9**
          1. Specified – **(vv. 3-7, 9)** – materials, pattern.
          2. Expediencies – not mentioned – tools, etc.
          3. Additions (not expedient, but altering specified, thus, transgression) – materials (tin, steel, cowhide, etc.), adding to pattern (bathroom for priests).
       2. Paul and the Macedonian Call – **Acts 16:6-12**
          1. Specified – **(vv. 9-10)** – preach gospel in Macedonia. (Negative – not Asia, Bithynia)
          2. Expediencies – not specifically mentioned in instruction – sailing. **(v. 11)**
          3. Additions – preaching human wisdom, storytelling, stopping by another city first.
11. Aid (expediency) or Addition (hindrance and transgression)?
    1. Assembly – **Hebrews 10:25** – authorized/commanded.
       1. **Aid** (expediency) – location (building) – **Acts 2:46** (temple); **Romans 16:3, 5** (church in house); **James 2:2** (“assembly” – synagōgē)
       2. **Addition** (hindrance and transgression) – virtual (NOTE: in pandemic, never was a true substitution – not true assembly – not replacement)
    2. Lord’s Supper – **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** – commanded.
       1. **Aid** (expediency) – time within 1st day of week, location of physical assembly, containers for emblems, etc.
       2. **Addition** (hindrance and transgression) – pbj (change of emblems), another day of week, virtual (taking at home – **Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-18, 20** – only examples are in assembly of local church).
    3. Teaching – **Matthew 28:20; Titus 2:3-4** – authorized/commanded.
       1. **Aid** (expediency) – method – public, private, class, entire assembly, teaching instruments (chalk board, PPT, etc.)
       2. **Addition** (hindrance and transgression) – human wisdom, creeds, storytelling.
    4. Giving – **1 Corinthians 16:1-2** – commanded.
       1. **Aid** (expediency) – check, cash, coins, collection basket/box, etc.
       2. **Addition** (hindrance and transgression) – tithing (not 10%, but ***“as he may prosper”***), any day other than 1st day (specified).
          1. Also, raising funds through raffles, fundraisers, events, receiving gifts from institutions, etc.
    5. Singing – **Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16** – commanded.
       1. **Aid** (expediency) – song books, pitch pipe, PPT.
       2. **Addition** (hindrance and transgression) – mechanical instruments (playing, not singing), choir (singing to us, not all singing together, speaking to one another), secular music (not psalms, hymns, spiritual songs – word of Christ).
    6. Evangelism – **Matthew 28:18-20** – commanded
       1. **Aid** (expediency) – lesson material, PPT, transportation, etc.
       2. **Addition** (hindrance and transgression) – persuading with human wisdom (**cf. Colossians 2:4, 8; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5**), attracting by carnal methods (**cf. John 6:27**) (food, drink, entertainment – we just want to get them here to hear the gospel – end justifies means?), missionary society (not the local church as God has shown).
12. If something adds to and or alters the commanded or authorized action of scripture it is not an expediency, but simply a sin disguised as one.

**Conclusion**

1. We must have authority for what we do.
2. There are areas of judgment God has granted us to make decisions helpful for carrying out His commands.
3. However, we must ensure these things are indeed authorized, and not dishonestly pass an unauthorized practice as an expediency.