

# Making Sense of a Contradiction in Present Salvation

Sunday Sermon

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## I. INTRODUCTION:

Opponents of Scripture will always look for occurrences that are seemingly contradictory. They will point to these as fuel to why they say Scripture can't be true and the inspired word of God. Those who have placed their faith in the infallibility of God's word will be convinced of its truth regardless. However, some things are sometimes difficult to explain. One such occurrence takes place in the book of Philippians.

If we understand Scripture correctly, we understand that we are at no point responsible for our own salvation. We know that we need God's power every day and in every situation to guide us. We understand that we cannot glorify God through our own power or ability. It is the Holy Spirit that energizes us to attain those things that are pleasing to God. So why would we have a Scripture in Philippians encouraging us to "work out our own salvation" (Phil. 2:12). Have we understood Scripture incorrectly? Is it incumbent upon us to operate from our own understanding ability? This would seem to contradict with other things we see written in the same epistle.

Today, we will endeavor to make sense of the obligation of the Believer to live out salvation in the present tense.

## II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO WORKOUT SALVATION (PHIL. 2:12)

### A. Workout by Definition

1. Workout<sup>1</sup>
2. Examples
  - a. The historical degeneration of men due to the sin nature led to the working out of acts from the flesh, Rom. 1:27
  - b. Paul's utilization of law led to the sin nature working out strong desires within him, Rom. 7:8
  - c. Paul was able to speak to Believers based on Christ working through Him, Rom. 15:18
3. Word Construction

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<sup>1</sup> Friberg – 15528 **κατεργάζομαι** 1aor. mid. κατεργασάμην; pf. κατείργασμαι; 1aor. pass. κατειργάσθην; (1) as thoroughly working at something whether in a good sense (2C 12.12) or bad sense (RO 1.27) *do, accomplish, commit* (possibly EP 6.13); (2) as achieving an effect whether in a good sense (JA 1.3) or bad sense (RO 7.8) *produce, make, bring about*; (3) as working toward an effect *prepare, carefully fashion, make completely ready* (2C 5.5); (4) *prevail, overcome* (possibly EP 6.13)

- a. Middle voice states the personal responsibility
- b. Reflexive pronoun emphasizes the personal responsibility

B. What Salvation?

- 1. One Salvation
- 2. Tenses of Salvation

C. Accompanied with Fear and Trembling

- 1. Fear of Punishment
- 2. Fear of Displeasure

**III. THE CONTRADICTION TO PERSONAL ABILITY TO WORKOUT SALVATION**

- A. Intimation of God starting and finishing a work in the Believer, Phil. 1:6
- B. Intimation of God working in the Believer to will and to do His good pleasure, Phil. 2:13
- C. Intimation of the Believers righteousness from present activity being from God, Phil. 3:9
- D. Intimation of all things being possible through Christ's strength, Phil. 4:13

**IV. THE TRUTH OF WORKING OUT SALVATION**

A. Salvation in Three Tenses

- 1. Initial – Paul speaking to Believers
- 2. Present – Paul speaking regarding present tense salvation
- 3. Future – Paul anticipating salvation in the future, cf. Phil. 3:21

B. Preceding Context

- 1. The power source of God, Phil. 1:6
- 2. The response of the individual, Phil. 1:19
- 3. The example of Christ, Phil. 2:5

**V. CONCLUSION:**

- A. Contradiction Potential
- B. Contextual Truth