

September 21, 2025

"Fail or Failed" – Richard Wallace

Genesis 12:10-20

¹⁰Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. ¹¹As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. ¹²When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. ¹³Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."

¹⁴When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. ¹⁵And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. ¹⁶He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

¹⁷But the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai. ¹⁸So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife?" ¹⁹Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!" ²⁰Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

Context Reminder: This passage comes right after God's covenant promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-9. Keep those promises in mind as we read what happens next.

1. Notice the details of the passage
 - a. What specific pressures and fears was Abram facing? (v. 10-11)
 - b. Trace Abram's decision-making process. What was his plan, and what were the potential consequences for each person involved?
 - c. How does the text describe God's involvement (or lack thereof) in verses 10-16?
 - d. What finally changes the situation in verses 17-20?
 - e. Who speaks in this passage, and who remains silent? What's significant about this?
2. How do Abram's actions work against each of God's covenant promises?
 - a. *Land:*
 - b. *Blessing to nations:*
 - c. *Family:*
3. Why do you think God didn't intervene earlier to prevent Abram's bad choices?
 - a. When have you experienced God's silence during a crisis? Looking back, what might God have been allowing you to learn?

4. The sermon emphasized this as God's "incarnational method" – his single touch entering the mess rather than preventing it. How do you see this pattern elsewhere in Scripture?
 - a. What does this teach us about how God typically works in difficult situations?
5. How does this story demonstrate that God's covenant isn't voided by our failures?
 - a. What's the difference between consequences and condemnation in how God deals with our failures?

Split into two groups for 10 minutes, then share insights:

Group 1 - When We Fail (Like Abram):

- What fears drive people to make choices they never thought they'd make?
- How does shame from our failures affect our relationship with God?
- What does this story teach about God's response to our fear-driven mistakes?

Group 2 - When We're Failed (Like Sarai):

- How might Sarai have felt during this ordeal? What questions might she have asked God?
 - What does God's intervention "because of Sarai" (v. 17) suggest about how He sees those who are hurt by others' choices?
 - How does God's rescue method here bring dignity back to those who've been treated as property?
6. Do you more often find yourself in Abram's position (making fear-driven choices) or Sarai's position (suffering from others' poor choices)? Or both at different times?
 - a. What current pressures or fears might be tempting you toward compromises you never thought you'd make?
 7. Looking back on difficult seasons, where have you seen God's incarnational presence - not preventing suffering, but entering it and transforming it?
 8. What person, conversation, or circumstance might have been God's "single touch" in your life?

For Those Who Have Failed:

- What shame or guilt are you carrying that might be hindering your faith in God's continued commitment to you?
- How might God want to "straighten out what fear has made crooked" in your life right now?

For Those Who Have Been Failed:

- Where do you need to hear the truth that "when others fail you, God will not fail you"?
- How can you trust God's process of incarnational redemption rather than demanding immediate rescue?

For Everyone:

- **Becoming God's "Single Touch" for Others:** How might God want to work His incarnational presence through you this week? Who in your life needs:
 - An advocate when they feel voiceless?
 - Dignity when they've been treated poorly?
 - Truth spoken in love when everyone else stays silent?
 - Practical help when others turn away?
9. How does this story change your understanding of what it means for God to be "faithful"?

This Week's Challenge: Choose one specific way you'll trust God's "single touch" in your current circumstances, and one specific way you'll be God's "single touch" for someone else.