

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY THE ARCHBISHOPS OF
CANTERBURY AND YORK

DUST ✝ GLORY

A Lent journey of faith,
failure and forgiveness

40 DAILY REFLECTIONS

Emma Ineson



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



Introduction

BY THE ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY AND YORK

The Lord said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness."

2 Corinthians 12.9

This Lent we are all invited to explore how we can live well with the mess of everyday life. *Dust and Glory* encourages us to take a fresh look at the frustrations and failings that every day brings and, rather than pretending we can always avoid them, seek to learn from them and grow closer to God through them.

2

Failure is human, universal and inevitable. The question is what we do with it and, even more importantly, what God does with it in partnership with us.

The Bible does not shy away from the reality of human limitations and mistakes, from the story of Adam and Eve right through the struggles of the people of Israel in the time of Judges, through to Judas' betrayal and Peter's denials of Jesus. But the Christian story is ultimately a story of failings redeemed and of sins forgiven. Our journey through Lent will lead us to the seeming failure and humiliation of Jesus' death on the cross. It is through that seeming defeat, however, that we will ultimately come to the joy of Jesus' triumphant resurrection.

If we were to judge others – or ourselves – only by what we get wrong, there would not be much hope. But this year's *Dust and Glory* journey reminds us that the end of our story is written by God – and calls us to trust in God's merciful and hope-filled judgement.

**Archbishop Justin Welby &
Archbishop Stephen Cottrell**

3

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dust and Glory: A Lent journey of faith, failure and forgiveness is the Church of England's theme for Lent 2023.

These daily reflections are based on the Archbishop of Canterbury's 2023 Lent Book, *Failure: What Jesus said about sin, mistakes and messing stuff up* (SPCK) by **Emma Ineson**, Bishop to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, recently announced as the next Bishop of Kensington.

The Church House Publishing and the Church of England Communications teams would like to express their gratitude to **SPCK Publishing** for their willingness to collaborate to maximise the range of print and digital resources offered to churches, discussion groups and individuals this year. And we are most grateful to Bishop Emma (and Abbie Martin who co-wrote the reflections with her) for ensuring close coordination between the Archbishops' Lent Book and the wider range of resources.

Details of the Lent book and the full range of resources to support this year's Lent theme can be found at CofE.io/DustAndGlory

CONTENTS

Introduction by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York 2

Acknowledgements 4

How to Use this Booklet 6

START OF LENT

A Mixture of Dust and Glory 8

WEEK 1

What is Failure? 17

Week 2

Understanding Sin 30

WEEK 3

Sinners as Well as We Can? 43

WEEK 4

Failure and the Church 56

WEEK 5

Living Well with Failure 69

HOLY WEEK

The Greatest Failure of All? 82

EASTER DAY

You've Never Failed 95

Going Further 98

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

***Dust and Glory: A Lent journey of faith, failure and forgiveness* invites us to find God in the mess of everyday life.**

This booklet contains 40 reflections, one for each of the forty days in Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday (which falls on 22 February 2023) and ends on Easter Eve (Saturday 8 April 2023), plus one for Easter Day. You can use it on its own, but my hope is that those who are also reading the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2023, *Failure: What Jesus said about sin, mistakes and messing stuff up* (SPCK) either individually or as part of a discussion group will find it helpful, too.

For each week (starting on a Sunday from Week 1 onwards) there is:

- **A theme** which corresponds to the chapters of the 2023 Lent book
- **A brief introduction** to the theme and readings for the week
- **A simple prayer.**

Each week we explore the idea of failure from a different angle and explore the difference God's

redeeming work in Jesus makes to how we deal with the challenges and shortcomings in our lives and our world.

For each day (Monday to Saturday) there are daily reflections which offer:

- **A theme**
- **A picture**
- **A short passage from the Bible**
- **A reflection** on the theme and reading
- **A challenge** linked to the day's theme.

Finally, there are a range of suggestions for **Going Further**.

There is also a version of the daily challenge for children (and their families) available in the accompanying booklet ***Dust and Glory: A Lent journey for children***. This offers a weekly reading and prayer, together with a daily action to help all ages make sense of life's struggles and draw closer to God as we journey towards Easter.

The booklet will be accompanied by daily social media posts from Ash Wednesday to Easter Day, together with a wide range of video and other free digital resources for individuals, groups and churches available via **CofE.io/DustAndGlory**

Emma Ineson

START OF LENT

A Mixture of Dust and Glory

Lent is traditionally a time when we acknowledge our failure to live up to God's purpose for our lives. And yet, in the shadow of the cross and the light of the resurrection, we find hope in the God who transforms failure into glory.



Prayer for the week

Lord Jesus, you spent forty days in the wilderness; walk with me in the wilderness of Lent and life. Hold my failures in the light of your compassion and guide me each day in your way. Amen.

Ash Wednesday

REMEMBER YOU ARE DUST



Read Genesis 3.19

“ *By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.* ”

Reflection

We begin Lent by looking back to the first book of the Bible, and the very first failure. We know the story: Adam and Eve disobey God and they eat the fruit that they have been told not to touch.

START OF LENT A Mixture of Dust and Glory

As a result, they are cast out of the Garden of Eden, condemned to suffering and death.

Fast forward to today, Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. As the ash is placed on our foreheads in the shape of the cross, those words from Genesis are spoken: "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return." It is a day to lament our disconnectedness from God. It begins a time where we consider those failures in our own lives which separate us from God today.

But the sign of the cross reminds us that in Jesus, our failure is overcome by God's glory. God himself comes to make up the distance we put between him and us.



**We all fail, in ways big or small, every day.
That's part of being human.**

**Ask yourself honestly where you've stepped
away from God recently.**

Thursday after Ash Wednesday

DON'T BLAME ME!



Read Genesis 3.8-15

“ *The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent tricked me, and I ate.”* ”

Reflection

Adam and Eve are too ashamed to admit their wrongs. Instead of taking responsibility, they seek to blame others. This is an easy trap to fall into,