

**2019-04-12 ... 7.00pm Sermon for Service of Confirmation and Holy Communion ...
The Bishop of Lichfield the Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave**

What is a bucket-list?

Easy: a list of all the things you want to experience for yourself before you die. Popular these days – and it only goes back 12 years to the movie with Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman.

What is an anti-bucket list?

A list of all the things you want other people, your friends, to experience after you die!

It's opposite to the selfishness of the bucket-list, and goes right back 2000 years to Jesus Christ.

Next week marks his last days on earth – in John's Gospel, following on from the passage read tonight, we hear Jesus' last words to friends. He speaks of gifts he wants them to have.

You, being confirmed tonight, are following Jesus' example, walking his way – a brave decision to take, putting others before yourself as he did.

What's on Jesus anti-bucket list? What should we be hoping people will receive?

Four things from John's gospel:

- Peace
- Joy
- Truth
- Life

Peace ...

John 14:27: "*Peace I give you, my peace I leave you, not as the world gives*"...

This might seem like a bad joke in today's world – but peace that changes the world comes from within us – it starts where we are, be kind, respectful, courteous – we really can make a difference.

Joy ...

John 15:11: "I have said these things that my joy may be in you and your joy complete." There's lots of joylessness and anger in our world – but we are called to be joyful people – not having a forced grin and pretending everything's great. That's not joyful, it's annoying – but the gift from beyond is the deep joy of the Spirit welling

up in us – our World needs a community of cheerfulness more than ever today – know that Jesus has overcome the World and we should be joyful.

Truth ...

John 16: 13: “The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth.”

In our World of fake news, fake accusations of fake news the most popular new word is ‘post-truth’ – but not for us: in Jesus we are given truth as it is, our faith is not something made up but given as a precious gift from the past to carry into the future – hold to truth amidst all the noise of society.

Life ...

John 17: 3: “this is eternal life – to know you, the only true God.”

The greatest thing of all on Jesus’ anti-bucket list is that he died for us so that we might have a life of richness and fulfilment. We could not dream of being apart from him – breathe the air of the future, feed on the bread of heaven – life begins now and never ends.

So let us pray for peace, joy, truth and life everlasting for us all in Jesus’ name.

Amen.