

What A Woman Wants In A Man Before She is 40

1. Handsome
2. Charming
3. Financially Successful
4. A Caring Listener
5. Witty
6. In Good Shape
7. Dresses with Style
8. Appreciates the Finer Things
9. Full of Thoughtful Surprises
10. An Imaginative, Romantic type

What A Woman Wants In A Man After She is 40

1. Not too ugly
2. Doesn't belch or scratch in public
3. Works steady
4. Doesn't nod off while she's emoting
5. Usually remembers the punch lines of jokes
6. Is in good enough shape to rearrange the furniture
7. Usually wears matching socks and fresh underwear
8. Knows not to buy champagne with screw-on tops
9. Remembers to put the toilet seat lid down
10. Shaves on weekends.

Peter as insightful - what he was putting together

Expectations change over time, and in some ways the account of the Transfiguration that we read in our gospel reading is about a change of expectations.

You may remember me preaching before that we are making a mistake to think Peter is just babbling nonsense because he

doesn't know what to say. It is always easy to make fun of what Peter says, as long as we're willing to admit that his words are often a lot like ours too. That is the case in the gospel reading. Peter's offer to make three dwellings is not an offer of an ignorant person, or a person who sees this glorious event and wants it to last forever. Peter is not afraid of returning to life as usual when they leave the mountain. No, Peter is voicing an insightful theological conclusion. He is seeing Jesus with Moses and Elijah. He is remembering his 'Sunday School' teaching well, that Moses and Elijah would probably appear at the end of time. He also knows that the Festival of the Booths is the final harvest festival of the season, and that in the first century Jews saw the Festival of the Booths as an end-of-time celebration.

So, Peter offers his services to Jesus, Moses, and Elijah to make three booths for them to celebrate this ultimate Festival of the Booths. The problem is, of course, that though Peter is both informed and very logical he is also totally wrong. God is doing something completely new. It is time to set aside old ways of understanding things and be open to the completely new and unexpected thing God is doing.

Do you remember what the voice says from heaven at Jesus' baptism, "You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased." Here at the Transfiguration the voice says something different, "This is my Son, my Chosen, *listen to him.*" We have to pause a moment at that statement and let it sink in.

The two greatest figures of the Old Testament were Moses and Elijah. Their words were authoritative above other words. The highest authority for Jews in those days were the books of the Bible supposedly written by Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Moses' words were the absolute authority. Now, in the same way God spoke to Moses, God has spoken again. This time it is to say that Jesus is God's chosen, listen to him. In other words, Jesus' words now supercede Moses' words. All that Moses said was great, but a newer and greater authority is around now, and it is time to listen; listen to new things.

The old tradition about how the world would end doesn't cut it anymore. The old covenant from Moses doesn't cut it anymore. The old way of relating to God simply can't be applied anymore. The new way will be revealed by Jesus, and he should be listened to.

You know what that new way is - it is the way of God's grace and love. Gone are the days of festivals and rituals and sacrifices and ceremonies to make God happy. In fact the whole way of being in relationship with God is different. You don't do things to make God happy. God is the one reaching out to you first. And unlike a woman whose expectations drop when she considers men over 40, here the expectations get better.

It was going to take seeing the crucifixion and resurrection for Peter to really understand what Jesus' words meant. But we get to know from the beginning.

So why is it so hard for us to live this joyous new reality? Because all of our lives and all of our relationships are based on the old way. We live in a world that every moment of every day tells us that we have to earn and deserve things. We are taught that the only things worth investing in are the things that will give you a return. How likely would it be for you to invest in a charity that was going to do no good and fail?

Last week we had the Rev. Matthew Nickoloff from the South Wedge Mission in Rochester preach for us. That mission is supposed to receive the building formerly used by Peace Lutheran Church. That sounds great, except there is a catch. Several years ago Peace put a new roof on their building and in order to pay for it that took out a mortgage. There's still close to \$30,000 left to pay on that mortgage. Peace has no money to pay it. Legally they cannot close until that mortgage is resolved. The South Wedge Mission cannot receive the building with a mortgage.

The idea was floated to have congregations in the conference get together and each raise some money to pay off the mortgage. Several pastors, myself among them, said no way! I said no one in my congregation would be willing to put money into paying off the mortgage of another church so they could close. That's absurd! There's no return. It would be our hard earned money thrown into a hole. If they created the debt they should pay it back, or sell the building to cover the mortgage.

You don't make a mess and then let it for someone else to clean it up.

But God will clean it up. That is the new reality that we are to hear from Jesus. It's different than the words through Moses or Elijah. Does that mean we should indeed pay off

Peace's mortgage for them? No. That's not my intent by that example. My intent is for us to realize just how different God's ways are than our own. That is why it is perpetually difficult to fully trust God. God's willing to invest heavily in lost causes, even knowing they are going to fail. Jesus died for you and for me, and for Judas and Hitler and Osama bin Laden. Ultimately judgment is God's and how God handles evil people is God's business, but God has invested in them all! And we all need God's investment in us.

God's willingness to invest in these lost causes can be troubling to us. I think we all know people we wish God wouldn't have been willing to die for, and wouldn't be willing to love. But if we can get past that... If we can let ourselves be washed in God's grace for us first, then I think we are able to open our hearts to God's grace for others too.

The voice said, "This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him!

May you be able to listen to the voice of God as it speaks to you always, no matter how far from your expectations it may be.

Amen