



A dear friend of mine, Shirley, recently sent me a slide show captivating this magnificent statue, “Christ the Redeemer,” that stands atop Mt. Corcovado overlooking Rio de Janeiro. The statue—standing 38 meters from foot to head—was designed by Brazilian Heitor da Silva Costa and created by Frenchman Paul

Landowski. Their work not only stands as a testament to their genius, but to our Savior.

In her email, Shirley wrote, “I will hold this dream close to my heart to one day make this climb and see this in person. I can only imagine !!!!!” I can not agree with her more. I believe I would stand in absolute awe if I ever had the privilege of visiting this monument to Jesus.

The pictures stirred my heart...not for a visit to Rio de Janeiro, but for something else. The pictures made me wonder, so I answered my friend’s email. The words I wrote then are for you too...if Jesus is your Savior.

“I hope you will one day fulfill your dream. I can just imagine what standing at the base of that giant statue must be like...

...but how much more so walking into the out-stretched arms of our Savior Jesus in heaven.

Can you imagine? He embraces you. You melt into his hug. Your eyes peer over his shoulder...and you behold the vista of heaven. Rolling on and on before you is the splendor of eternity. Inhabiting the landscape is Moses... Solomon...Deborah... Rahab... Peter...Gideon...angels, my oh my, angels... seraphim and cherubim...and look, there’s Michael.

Dotting the hills and valleys and plains and mountains are mansions prepared for each of the Savior's followers. Almost overlooked, because you gaze upon this magnificence, are the loved ones who inhabit some of those houses of holiness. On earth, you missed them ever so greatly. Now they surround the throne of God with their hands reaching toward you. No, not you. They reach toward Jesus. And then, then—only after they have filled their eyes with the Lamb of God—they turn their eyes upon you and you glory in their welcome.

Nearly undone with the millions of sensory inputs cascading through your very soul, you glance down ever so briefly only to behold that upon which you stand. Could it be? A sea of crystal? You see into it. Down into it. Deep, deep, deep down...as if it might descend to infinity. It undulates with the rhythm of heaven. Yet it is more solid than any place you have ever before placed your feet.

Having witnessed infinity at the feet of Jesus, you think to look up. The glow of the light of Christ illuminates an expanse so vast no eye can penetrate its reach. At one and the same time you see worlds flickering in the distance as you once did on earth, but also see them up close and personal as if you were walking upon them...and at once you realize you are no longer exercising earthly eyesight, but heavenly eyesight. Never again will you see as through a mirror darkly. All of this. All of this is yours, but not yours. It is the Lord's... and he gives it to you without reservation. You see it. You experience it. You revel in it. You long to explore it...

...and then that wonder fades. You look no longer upon the vistas of heaven. You no longer peer over the shoulder of Jesus. You lift your head. You turn it ever so slightly. You lift your eyes...and they meet his...can you imagine...you look into the very eyes of love and compassion and sacrifice and wisdom and grace and peace and righteousness and mercy. Yet none of these compares to something else you see. You see God. The eternal. The infinite. The Spirit. And you finally understand. The limits of time and space and matter have been stripped away. You observe the very mystery of creation and all that was



eternal before creation. Your heart accelerates. The love you feel is overwhelming. If it were not for his hug, you would fall upon your face before him. Yet still you look into his eyes...and you see one more thing. You see something no other will ever see. You see into the heart of the everlasting second member of the trinity spreading his arms out wide upon that old rugged cross. You see into his soul and mind...and you see you. There in that most important moment of history...in all of his agony...as he became a sin sacrifice for the world...you were front and center in his thoughts. As blood spilled upon his now unrecognizable face, the corners of his lips lifted, because...because he smiled. Oh my God, my marvelous God, he smiled. He smiled for you. He did. He does. He always will.

Is Jesus your Savior.