



In my mind, I can see Mt. Rushmore. It's hard to believe it's been almost 20 years since I was there. I remember how majestic and regal those presidents looked up there. This time though, my mind sees something strange. The faces on the mountain are not those of the presidents, but in their places, I see the images of the various members of my family, those I hold dearest and love the most. As I stand there, awed by the stateliness and the grandeur of the work of art before me, I see the Sculptor, the One who

originally carved those dear faces, mounting the rocky cliffs. Higher and higher He goes; up, up to where the countenances of my loved ones are displayed. Then, to my horror, without apparent reason or provocation, the artist, hammer and chisel in hand, starts to pound and chip away at those images, One by one, He breaks pieces away and allows huge chunks of rocks to go smashing down the cliffs below. I cried because He was destroying what I thought to be beautiful and perfect. Day after day He hammered, chiseled, and pried at those stone faces. I now no longer could recognize the original sculptures of my family.

How cruel I thought. What kind of artist would deliberately distort and mar such beautiful handwork? After all, in my mind, I could see no fault in the original work - no reason for such drastic measures.

After listening to the renovations for what seemed an eternity to me, I was surprised when finally the noise and din of the sculptor's tools had ceased.

There was an unusual peacefulness in the air. Hoping to see some remnant lingering of those faces that were so dear to me, I looked up. I'll never, as long as I live forget what I saw in that moment. In the place where my mother's face had been, there was the face of Jesus! And where my father's countenance had been

portrayed - the face of Jesus! And one by one, the faces where the others had been, was now the lovely, gentle, and kind image of Jesus.

It was then I thought of the words of Paul, found in Romans 8:29:

Those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.

No longer did I think the Master Sculptor cruel and unfeeling. No longer did I hate the changes and disfigurements that took place on the countenances of those I loved. Now I could see, with each stroke of the hammer - each chunk that fell to the cliffs and shattered, had been planned all along by the Sculptor, so that in the end, only a clear picture of the Savior remained.

And God looked down from heaven and I heard Him say: This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.

(Anonymous 1981)