

Story: I Don't Want to Try

May 8, 2022

Acts 9:36-43

John 10:22-30

by Eric Anderson

It was coming up to graduation day in the i'iwi school – why, yes, i'iwi go to school. They learn to fly from the nest, but there's advanced flying techniques to learn, and flower identification, and how not to be where the i'o is hunting. These things are important.

One i'iwi was not looking forward to the final test. She was quite good in most subjects. She was a strong flyer. She knew the flowers of the ohia forest like the back of her... wing. She had learned to find sheltered places in the trees when hungry i'o were near. But... there was one thing she had not mastered.

She didn't eat upside down.

That's one of the things that i'iwi frequently do. They get to a flower, particularly those like the 'opelu or 'oha wai, flowers which sort of point downward from their stems, and they swing upside down so they can push their curved beak into the flower from below. They sip the nectar, swing back up again, and push off to the next flower. It's a pretty basic way for i'iwi to eat.

For whatever reason, this young i'iwi found the whole idea incomprehensible. "I'll get a headache," she said. "I never have," said her teacher. "I'll miss the flower opening with my beak," she said. "There's always a second time to try," said the teacher. "I'll lose my grip," she said. "That's not likely," said the teacher, "and besides, you can fly."

"I'll just sip ohia," she said. "You can do that," sighed her teacher, "but 'oha wai is pretty tasty. And you won't graduate from i'iwi school."

She just set her wings and looked cross.

A little later, she watched her best friend sip from an 'ohelu flower – upside down – and asked, "How can you do that?"

"It's not hard," said her friend. "How can you not?"

"I've tried enough new things," she said. "I don't want to try any new ones."

“OK,” said her friend. “I guess you can live the rest of your life without trying anything new. I can’t imagine that will go well for you.”

She thought about it as her friend flitted from flower to flower, sipping the ‘ohelu nectar.

“All right,” she said. “I don’t want to try. I don’t really think I can do it or that it will be good. But I can’t live the rest of my life without trying new things. So I’ll try this one, too.”

She hopped onto a flowering stem, let herself swing upside down with a shudder, and poked her beak into the blossom. A moment later she’d hopped to another stem with another flower and did it all over again.

“Not so bad?” asked her friend.

“I guess I can try a few more new things,” she said. And she did.