

# Story: Dry Season

March 26, 2023

Ezekiel 7:1-14

John 11:1-45

A dry season had come to the ohī'a forest, and one 'apapane was worried about it.

She still considered herself young, but she'd long since left the nest, and for most of her life things had been rather predictable in her forest. That is, there would be rain, and there would be sun, and there would be clouds, and there would be rain again. It was often hard to tell when any of those things would happen, but she knew that they would happen, and if it seemed to rain for a long time, the sun would come again.

That season, however, had been very sunny, and the nights had had mostly clear skies. Clouds had spread across the sky sometimes, but they'd been high up and they hadn't been the sources of rain. She'd been accustomed to sipping water from the tops of leaves from time to time, but she hadn't been able to do that for several days. That was all right; she could satisfy her thirst with nectar, but she could tell that the trees were beginning to suffer from the dryness themselves.

Trees that went into blossom produced fewer flowers. Other trees simply didn't go into blossom, or seemed to be putting it off. She was doing all right for now, but she wondered – she worried – about what would happen if this went on. Would there come a day with no flowers at all?

She sang a sad little song as she settled into a branch to sleep overnight. It was a song about sadness and fear and just a hint of hunger and thirst. The ohī'a heard the song, and when it was done, the tree sang its reply in the breeze rustling its leaves.

The 'apapane didn't really hear the tree's song, she was asleep. Instead, the song became something of a dream, and in the dream she saw the sun leaping from the horizon, speeding across the sky, and diving below the opposite horizon – and then it all happened again, faster and faster. She realized, in wonder, that she was seeing days race by in seconds. Those days included sunshine and clouds and rain, but each one took just a brief time before the sun was flying across the sky with the next day again.

Then, in her dream, came a series of days in which the sky stayed blue and the rain didn't fall. Day after day, and in her dream she saw the flowers fade and wither on the ohī'a. She wondered if this was a sign that the end was near... but then, in her dream, the sun rose one

morning behind clouds, and as the sun raced invisibly across the sky, the clouds streamed rain upon the waiting trees below.

As the dream went on, she saw long dry periods and long wet periods, but they both came to an end, turning to rain if they'd been dry and to sun if they'd been rainy.

"Do not fear, little one," she heard the tree sing as the dream drew to a close. "Do not fear."

She woke to see the sun rising again, now at its normal pace, and the tree now silent in the still air of the morning. She shook herself awake, and saw that overnight the tree had produced a new set of blossoms – not many, but plenty for breakfast.

"Thank you, tree," she said, though she wasn't entirely sure she'd heard the tree singing or not. Still, it's good to give thanks for breakfast.

"Thank you," she said again. "I won't fear."

Good things and bad things come to us in life. The bad news is that the good things will come to end from time to time. The good news is that the bad things will come to an end, too. Do not fear, because the best news of all is that God's love is the good thing that never ends.

*by Eric Anderson*