

# Story: High Tide

December 1, 2024

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Luke 21:25-36

The auku'u, or black crowned night heron, likes to eat. If you look out along the shallows of Hilo Bay, or in the rivers of the valleys, you'll find auku'u perched on rocks or grass or just standing in the water looking for fish. Although they're called "night herons" in English, in Hawai'i auku'u fish during the day, and do pretty well at it.

One auku'u, however, developed a somewhat unusual habit. He didn't like being wet, which is a sad thing for a bird living in Hilo, and he discovered that if he waited for high tide he could spend less time with his feet in the water, since the water, as it were, brought the fish to him.

The thing about a high tide is that it happens just about twice a day, roughly twelve and a half hours apart. That means that sometimes high tide will be in the middle of the day, but a couple weeks later it's well into the evening. At some times there would be two high tides during daylight, but at other times one high tide would be in the middle of the night. That meant he'd go over a day between meals. And that would make him hungry.

He was moping on the shoreline one morning, waiting for the next high tide (coming in at noon) when a friend landed near him. Noticing that he looked unhappy, she asked him what was wrong.

"I'm hungry," he said.

She looked at him. Auku'u have been known to say, "I'm hungry," but they usually say it while they're on their way to start fishing. An auku'u sitting near the water and saying, "I'm hungry," was a new and different experience. She didn't know what to say.

"I haven't eaten since about this time yesterday," he said.

"For heaven's sake, why? Aren't there any fish?"

Then he explained about fishing at high tide.

"Let me get this straight," she said. "You're going hungry for hours because you don't want to get your feet wet?"

"Do you like wet feet?" he demanded.

"I like being hungry a lot less," she replied.

He was silent because, he realized, he like being hungry less than he liked having wet feet.

"Sometimes things are perfect," she said, "like when you get to fish at high tide. But most of the time, we have to muddle along with things as they are. At those times you do the best you can, and look forward to it getting better later on.

"Now come with me," she told him. "Let's go fishing. I'm hungry."

The two of them flew over to the shore.

*by Eric Anderson*