

Story: Grand

September 14, 2025

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Luke 15:1-10

There was a tree, an ohī'a tree, that stood on the cliffside above Kilauea Iki. The tree had stood there long years. He was tall. He was grand. And he was proud.

He looked down upon the mostly flat black rock of Kilauea Iki and sniffed. There were ohī'a trees down there, too, but they were small and bushy. The tallest rose no more than eight or nine feet, less than a tenth of this tree's one hundred foot crown.

"You're so small," he said to the little ohī'a trees below. "What difference can you make?"

Next to him stood another tree, just as tall, just as grand, but not so proud and rather wiser. "Don't you remember?" she asked him. "This was no more than a pond of lava years ago. These trees had to catch every drop of rain. They had to make their own soil. Someday this crater will be filled with trees, and it will be because these trees got it started."

"Well, all right," huffed the other tree. "But what about these little bugs that crawl all over me? They're even smaller. And they nibble at me. And they itch. They can't be of any use."

His neighbor looked him over and said, "These are the same creatures that attract the birds to you. Between the birds and the bugs, they carry the pollen around that means there will be ohī'a seeds."

"Seeds," huffed the proud tree. "What good are they? They're even tinier than the bugs!"

"Seeds," said the wise tree, "mean that there will be a future for our forest up here on the cliffsides as well as in the rocky bottoms of the craters. Seeds mean new trees where there hadn't been any before."

"Seeds," she said softly, "mean that when we are measuring our height on the forest floor, there will be other trees rising over us."

The proud tree huffed again. "There could never be a tree as grand as me," he said, and he ruffled his branches in the breeze.

"Seeds," said the wise tree, as she watched a little cloud of them dance in the wind from the proud tree, "Seeds mean that there will be a forest even grander than either of us."

by Eric Anderson