

Story: The 'Apapane Who Deserved More

September 20, 2026

Jonah 3:10-4:11

Matthew 20:1-16

'Apapane chicks don't all behave the same way, just as human children don't all behave the same way. You have loud ones and quiet ones, greedy ones and hungry-but-not-pushy ones, polite ones and brash ones.

This 'apapane nest had an assortment. There was one who was greedy and pushy, and mom and dad had to push him out of the way quite often to feed his brother and sister. The sister was pretty pushy herself, but not quite willing to get into wrestling matches with her brothers. The last brother, though, was quiet and polite. He waited patiently for mom or dad's attention, ate his caterpillars with every sign of appreciation, and even chirped, "Thank you." Politely!

His parents had had a number of chicks by then, and most of them had been pretty pushy when mealtimes came along. They didn't quite know what to do with a polite chick, but they made sure they he was fed the same as his brother or sister, despite his siblings' best efforts to get in front all the time.

They all grew, of course, and they learned to fly. The pushy brother and sister alternated between pushing to the front and loudly squawking that it was too scary to fly. The polite brother kept his beak shut, watched his parents closely, and when it came time for that first leap into the air managed a very creditable first flight. His brother and sister protested that they would have been better if they'd gone first, but they hadn't, so...

The days drew on, and it was time to leave the nest. Mother and Father continued to feed them from time to time, but they were finding their own food, and they were getting better and better at it. The pushier siblings did, in fact, excel in seeking out new blossoms, bugs and caterpillars. The polite one tended to follow along behind and not get in anyone's way. He ate just as well, though.

They were out of the nest, and the rambunctious chicks were making a somewhat rambunctious life. The polite one stayed near his parents, and to their surprise, kept making occasional flutters with his wings at them. That was a sign that he'd like something to eat – but he was fully capable of finding food himself. One day Mother just had to ask.

"What's the matter? Why are you asking us for food? Is there something wrong?"

"Not at all," said the polite son. "I just thought it made sense."

"You thought what made sense?" asked Mother, who didn't know.

"I've tried to be a good son," he said. "I've tried to be calm and polite. I've tried to learn things quickly and well. I've tried to treat you, my brother and sister, and all the birds well."

"And I appreciate it," said Mother, who still didn't understand what that had to do with wanting to be fed.

"Shouldn't there be a reward for that?" asked his fledgling son. "Like more feedings, perhaps?"

"Feedings aren't a reward, son," said Mother. "Your father and I love you, and we love your brother and sister, so we've given you what you need. And you've grown. You've learned. You've thrived. Nothing we've done was intended to reward any of you. We've seen to your needs.

"But now you don't need what you're asking for. You have our love always, and it's bigger than you know. But you need to be your own bird, and that's how we'll love you today: by giving you what you need. Again. Go find your own nectar, and enjoy it."

by Eric Anderson