[Narrator] Today's story is from a book in the new testament of the bible called Philemon. It's a very short book, in fact it is a letter from Paul to Philemon who was one of the leaders in a very early Church. Paul's letter to Philemon is about his Run away slave named Onesimus, who has come to Paul for his protection. Paul has protected Onesimus and Onesimus has become both a follower of Jesus and someone that Paul can count on to help he and his friends who are in prison. In our story, Paul shows Philemon and Onesimus that they are both part of Gods family and what that means for them. In our story are Paul who is in a prison and Onesimus, a young man who is a run away slave who, because he isn't in prison helps Paul and his friends who are in prison with Paul. Let's watch as Paul teaches Onesimus what being in God's family means.

[Scene] Paul is sitting at table with pen and paper. Onesimus comes in with basket in hands, basket has groceries in it. Onesimus puts basket down.

[Onesimus] Good Morning Mr. Paul. I found some really good fish and vegetables in the market this morning and I hope that you and Mr. Luke and Mr. timothy will like what I'm going to do with them.

You know Mr. Paul, I think that the guard is starting to trust me like you told me he might. He didn't make me take everything out of my basket today, and he didn't steal anything either like some of them do. Do you think he might be learning about Jesus and being in God's family?

[Paul] Good Morning Onesimus. Maybe you are right, maybe the Guard is learning about God's family. You know, since he mostly talks with you, you are probably the won he's learning it from. Have you ever thought about that Onesimus, you're showing people what it means to be a part of God's family?

[Onesimus] Really? but the guard hasn't been baptized or anything like that, don't you have to be baptized to be part of God's family.

[Paul] Let's look at it this way, he hasn't joined God's family yet, maybe he never will, who knows but if that ever happens a lot of it will be because of your example of being a part of God's family. You've done your best to befriend him and care about him like Jesus taught us to do.

[Onesimus] Thanks Mr. Paul. I really do like helping all of the Jesus followers who are kept here in this prison. You know that I wish that you were all free, but I have never felt this good about myself and I really feel like I'm a part of your family.

[Paul] Onesimus, I feel the same way about you. I'm very proud of you, and if I had a son I'd want him to be as friendly, and thoughtful and helpful as you have been to me and all of us.

[Onesimus] Thank you Mr. Paul.

[Paul] I've been thinking and praying about you Onesimus, you've grown up a lot since you came here and found me. I feel like you are a part of my family to but I'm concerned.

[Onesimus] What are you concerned about?

[Paul] I'm concerned about Mr. Philemon and the people in God's family who worship at his house. I think it might be time for you to go back there and be with them.

[Onesimus] Mr. Paul, for Mr. Philemon I'm just a runaway slave. If I go back there he can have me punished. I'd be lucky if he only had me whipped. You know that he could even have me killed and it would be totally legal. He's angry about, well, other stuff to and I thought that I was doing God's work by helping you here.

[Paul] Onesimus, You've been great. I know that I can count on you and if I had my way I'd keep you here helping all of us like you do. But I think that God wants you and Philemon to work things out between you. I really meant it when I said you were like a son to me. You are my spiritual son, and that's why I'm writing a letter to Philemon telling him that and also telling him that if he thinks that you owe him anything to charge it to me. Mr. Philemon is also part of God's family, and though he could choose to punish you, he could follow the advice that I'm giving him and treat you like what you really are, his brother in Christ.

[Onesimus] Do you really think that is possible Mr. Paul?

[Paul] Did you believe that a guard could treat you with some respect? Well the Guard just did that because he is changing. Well I believe that Mr. Philemon has changed a lot as well. I think it's worth trying and I'm convinced that you are safe. Besides, I think I'm going to be let out soon and I'll go and see the Church at Philemon's house as soon as that happens. When that does happen, it would be great to know that you are there helping them get ready for me.

[Narrator] Well, we don't know what happened to Onesimus, but we do have Paul's letter to Philemon who was a part of God's family. We know that being in God's family means forgiving and trusting and we know how good it would feel to get a new family member so things almost certainly went well for both Onesimus and Philemon who found out that they were in the same family, God's family, just like all of us.

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