Coastal Community Church Small Group Questions – Week of October 28th
Gloucester Campus

Icebreaker: Share a funny story from your own childhood, or from your son’s/daughter’s childhood.

1. Read Romans 8:31-39 together and consider the following question:
   a. The Apostle Paul quotes Psalm 44:22 in Romans 8:36. What is Paul’s purpose in quoting this Psalm? (Also read Psalm 44 together when considering the answer to this question)

   There are three main explanations of this reference to Psalm 44 by Biblical scholars: 1. That Paul is citing Psalm 44 to indicate that suffering is to be the expected norm for the people of God, 2. That Paul is suggesting that Psalm 44 is a prophecy about the suffering and persecution of the Church, and 3. That Paul is suggesting that the Gospel is a response to the protesting lament of both Psalm 44 and of the persecuted church. While there is likely some truth in all three explanations, the 3rd explanation seems to be the most plausible given the context in which Paul makes reference to this Psalm. As the people of God have suffered and will suffer, we must remember the faithfulness of God to fulfill his promises through the Gospel of Christ Jesus. When we experience all kinds of suffering and trials (which as the Psalmist points out, are in accordance with the sovereign will of God) we can have confidence and hope that none of it will be able to separate us from the love of God because of what God has done on our behalf in Christ Jesus.

   For further study, see the following link:
   http://themelios.thegospelcoalition.org/article/for-your-sake-we-are-being-killed-all-day-long-romans-8-36

2. Read 1 John 3:16-18 and consider the following question:
   a. What does it mean to love our brother?

   John says we ought to “lay down our lives for the brothers.” This works out practically through our generosity and good works toward one another. It’s not enough to simply speak love or feel love, but we must demonstrate true love for our brothers with our actions as Christ has demonstrated His love for us through the cross.
3. Read 1 John 4:7-21 and consider the following question:
   a. In light of what it means to love our brother (1 John 3), what does it mean to hate our brother?

   We often view hatred as something we actively do, but in this context, hatred can be something we passively manifest when we are not willing to lay down our lives for others or demonstrate our love through generous good deeds and actions. In this case, the absence of tangibly demonstrated love equates to hatred.

   b. What is the significance of love in the life of a Christian as defined by 1 John 4?

   John Stott’s commentary says, “Love for God expresses itself not only in a confident attitude towards him, devoid of fear, but in a loving concern for our brothers and sisters. The perfect love that drives out fear drives out hatred also. If God’s love for us is made complete when we love one another, so is our love for God. John does not mince his words. If how a person behaves contradicts what he says, he is a liar. “ Love for others is the evidence of love for God in the life of the Christian. If we do not love others, we do not love God, and we are only deceiving ourselves.

   c. Consider your own love for others. How have you noticed God change the way you love others since becoming a believer?

   Answers will vary. Guide the discussion in the direction of recognizing the sanctifying work of God in our lives (or lack thereof) and respond with worship (or repentance).