How the mighty have fallen. This is an expression my mother used frequently. It usually referred to someone with a big ego or someone who thought they were mighty, and she used it facetiously. As long as she wasn’t using it about me it was ok. In this case David is referring both to king Saul and his best friend, Jonathon. David is mourning their deaths in a big way and probably for different reasons. The death of Saul meant that it was his turn to be king. The weight of this responsibility was surely huge. The realization that even God appointed king’s are mortal just like anyone, else must have weighed heavily on David. This, coupled with the responsibilities and realization of his own fate were a lot to grieve. He also lost the one person he could have counted on for love and support in his life. A person that he counted on and trusted, his best friend, Jonathon. These two people that David probably thought were invincible to some extent had succumbed to death. War is like that though. Battles both in war time, and on the streets or those of a tribal nature take lives. Even warriors like Saul and Jonathon supposedly fighting on the Right side, the good side; perish. So of course, David mourns. This world has lost so many people throughout time through violence. Humanity seems to think human lives are expendable if the cause is righteous. I think of the worlds’ loss in the deaths of Gandhi, Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., and the millions of men and women who died in the WW11, WW1, Korea, Vietnam, Syria, Burkina faso, Sudan, afghanistan and the list goes on and on and the mourning continues. David’s faith is still strong, his laments often go out as cries to God asking why and at the same time realizing that through the pain of loss and suffering that God is still at the forefront. These battles, these wars, this murder and even the taking of one’s own life are the actions of a broken humanity, not the actions of God. Paul tries to get us on the right track here by reminding us that the great economic disparities in this world are often what causes the separations and the desire to take from another, even lives. Paul says that some have a lot and some have very little but we are to give what we can to those who need it. I’m struck today by the hostility many people have to the word socialism. In its best form this concept would allow us to share resources more equitably. Up until recently, it seems to have spelled disaster for any politician to use this word. Yesterday I heard the future mayor of Buffalo, NY asked the question on NPR: are you really a socialist and she replied yes I am…Her victory and upset of the incumbent candidate was a huge upset. Her stated goals are admirable; to make Buffalo a sanctuary city where immigrants will be safe from deportation and a city that condemns the acts of unnecessary police brutality against black men. The fact that she, a nurse and activist was able to achieve this office gives one hope that the democratic process of voting can work. If Ms. Walton is able to achieve her goals in Buffalo, a little bit of the disparity that affects immigrants and blacks can be removed. A little bit of the balance which is so very unequal in this country and most others can be righted. During WW11 Hitler tried to destroy the Jewish people and many other people he considered to be without value including non-whites, the disabled, non-heterosexual etc…He was a man who seemed unstoppable and powerful. He engineered the deaths of millions of people especially Jewish people. Israel was the sanctuary created after the war for Jewish people. It too, like all human made creations gets off balance at times. The relationship between Israel and Iran is volatile. Human lives, religion, and equal distribution of resources is the cost. Jesus tries to remind us today and every day that God is a God of healing, a God of grace, one of surprises, and most of all, a God of love. The fact that David was able to publicly raise Saul up and uphold his dignity and reputation even when he may not have thought he was a stellar person was gracious. His relationship with Jonathon was one that he treasured and we should always treasure relationships with one another and spread God’s love wherever and whenever we can. David’s faith remained strong and there is evidence that he turned back to God even when he succumbed to sin. His psalms speak of a man who always sought out God in the midst of his suffering. The woman in the gospel reading is also one who sought out God in the midst of her suffering. As a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years and had sought every cure she could through the medical means available in this time period, she had only one hope left. Her faith led her to believe that even by just touching Jesus garment she would be cured. She understood that the true power of healing was not through anything a human could provide but only through God could she be healed and allowed to rejoin and enjoy relationships with her community again. She needed an act of grace and she got one. She then had to confess what she had done not only to Jesus but to the very crowd that had discounted her because of her illness. Her healing seems to have been tied into the communities healing through acceptance and faith. This woman that they had thrown away as worthless and without value was healed through the grace of God. Her public belief and admission of God’s power to do so awakened everyone who witnessed this act. How far does God’s healing go we may wonder. Isn’t all hope lost after someone dies? It depends on what we do with our grief and our love of that person. Can we use these feelings and experiences to move on and be healers ourselves or do we become outcast of society and isolated from not only other people but the grace of God. The healing of Jarius’ daughter amid another crowd of disbelieving spectators is another healing of Jesus. His dismissal of them and their lack of faith says a lot. They think it’s all over for the 12 y.o. child they presume to be dead; in fact for all intensive purposes they have already buried her. Jesus and his three disciples go to her and say two words and she is alive once more. Jesus doesn’t want witnesses to this miracle: her life is testament to his healing power. Even death does not have the last word. God’s grace to work in us yes even in those who mourn and suffer is something we can never give up on. God’s grace to work throughout our individual and communal lives is truly amazing. It is through our constant watching and awakening that we too can experience it and know that it is working within us. Hafiz says this about grace:

Now is the time to know
That all that you do is sacred.

Now, why not consider
A lasting truce with yourself and God.

Now is the time to understand
That all your ideas of right and wrong

Were just a child’s training wheels
To be laid aside

When you can finally live
With veracity
And love.

Hafiz is a divine envoy
Whom the Beloved
Has written a holy message upon.

My dear, please tell me,
Why do you still
Throw sticks at your heart
And God?

What is it in that sweet voice inside
That incites you to fear?

Now is the time for the world to know
That every thought and action is sacred

This is the time
For you to deeply compute the impossibility
That there is anything
But Grace.

Now is the season to know
That everything you do
Is sacred.

– Hafiz