

**Thoughts on the Daily Word**

*12<sup>th</sup> Week of Year. Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June. Readings: 2 Kings 19:9-11,14-21,31-36; Psalm 47; Matthew 7:6,12-14.*

Assyria was a byword for cruelty in the ancient world. Whole nations were deported from their homelands at great human cost. The intent was to destroy local loyalties and keep Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, in power. Even centuries later they would be remembered in the Book of Jonah as the hated place the prophet would not go to. Assyria deported the northern kingdom of Israel and only the little kingdom of Judah remained. Hezekiah, one of the good faithful descendants of David, attempted to negotiate at first, but to no avail, it just encouraged Sennacherib. His faithfulness, however, led to an eventual determination to resist the Assyrians at the gates of Jerusalem. Encouraged by the great prophet Isaiah he repudiates the enemy and trusts in Yahweh. The result is an amazing victory, solely by God's power. This is the theme behind our Gospel story. At its centre is the determination to be faithful to the covenant, to do what it commands. Before and after are sayings that tell us to be like Hezekiah, don't negotiate with God's enemy and go like an arrow to the heart of what matters. All these things we cannot do ourselves. That is clear in the Sermon on the Mount that we have been listening to. Only with God's power can we triumph.