



Messing about in our Boats!

In contemplating the title of this article I am reminded of Ratty's passionate view about boats in one of his first conversations with his friend Mole in Kenneth Grahame's 'The Wind in the Willows'

'Nice? It's the only thing,' said Water Rat solemnly, as he leant forward for his stroke. 'Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing-absolutely nothing-half as much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing,' he went on dreamily: 'messing-about-in-boats; messing-'

The Wind in The Willows
Kenneth Grahame

We may love messing about with boats or we may hate it. We may love the sea or we may hate it. Boats and water may excite us or frighten us. They have the potential to engulf us or to transport us to places that we can only dream about. Because boats and water are a bit unpredictable. They do involve a lot of rocking about, of shifting around and movement.

If we think about it, for each of us our individual's boat journey is unique and special. So what is our personal boat like? What function does it have, if it has one at all? A rowing boat perhaps, or explorer ship, a rescue boat or tug, an ice-breaker or galleon maybe? Is our boat sailing the ocean or splashing around in a local pond? All these boats and places are equally good places to be, depending on what type of boat we are and where our voyage has taken us so far.

Wherever our analogy with boats takes us our boat hopefully is right for us, to suit our own personality and our own circumstances. We know too, from the Gospel stories, that Jesus wants to come along in our boat. Yet even with Jesus in our boat, the journey is still going to be a challenging one, daunting and, maybe, hard too, but hopefully exciting and joyful as well.

In a short 'pastoral thought' such as this I can only leave you to explore this analogy about our faith journey yourself. You never know what you may come up with. Think about casting off into deeper waters; about the maps and charts you may use on your voyage, about how you will have to navigate stormy waters and about whether you are a lone sailor or one of a crew. Our cargo, we referred to before!

I think that using boats and water to explore our faith journey is a simple but powerful analogy with endless opportunities to make us think. So enjoy dabbling and messing

about in your boat on your particular stretch of water. The purpose of any boat or ship is to undertake a voyage. So how would you respond if God said to you today, "Where would you like to sail to?" and he added, "Is your boat ready and fit for purpose?"