

Saint Augustine (354-430), Bishop of Hippo (North Africa) and Doctor of the Church  
Sermon 104

## **"A woman whose name was Martha welcomed him"**

We shall be seated at table in eternity. I would not dare to say this if it had not been the Lord who promised it. He promises a great reward to his servants, for he says: «he will have them recline at table and proceed to wait on them,» (Lk 12,37)... Great is this promise, then, and happy its fulfilment. Let us act in such a way as to be worthy of it; may we be so helped as to come to the place where the Lord will serve us at table.

What will that meal be if not a rest? And what does «He will serve us» mean if not that he will satisfy us? With what food and drink? To be sure, with truth itself... Do you doubt that God is able to feed you in this way when already your eyes are being filled with light in the same way? If many see the light, yet it shines abundantly; if few see it, yet it shines with the same brightness. It spreads comfort abroad but cannot fall short; we use it without causing its diminishment... Why do you still not understand? Because you are preoccupied with many things. Martha's work preoccupies you. Even more: it preoccupies us all. For who is free from this work of serving?...

And so, my beloved, I beg and exhort you...: let us long for this life together. Let us run together towards it so that, when we arrive, we may dwell there. The time is coming and will have no end when the Lord will seat us at table to serve us. With what will he serve us if not himself? Why ask what you will be eating? It is the Lord himself... «One thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord,» (Ps 27,4)... So let us not have any taste for fleshly food...: it will come to an end. If you want to carry out Martha's task by busying yourself with it, let it be with moderation and compassion... Work comes to an end, rest will come, yet one doesn't attain to rest except by working. The boat passes on, one reaches one's homeland, yet the homeland is reached only by means of the boat. But I am certain that we will not suffer shipwreck because we are carried on the wood of the cross.