

## 70 Years and a Lunch Line - How Free Will I Be After I Die?

Sam Harley  
November 2, 2025



I'm 70 now, and my body is slowing down. I've had enough tangible experiences to know there is a world beyond this physical one we're in right now. My body giving up won't be the end, there'll be a part of me that will live on, without physical restrictions. As the reality of ascending to the spirit world (dying) gets closer, I do wonder how it's going to be, how I'm going to do there.

I've been feeling for a long while that I'm doing ok, I'll be ok. I have my glaring flaws, and regret some screwups, but I've fought and done my best never to give in. Still....

I've assumed I'd be relatively free there, to roam around, explore.

But one Sunday, after church, I faced a familiar moment. We serve lunch, and there is a room full of tables, seating four people each. It's always been an awkward moment for me, choosing where to sit, or who to sit with. I like to plunk myself down first, so then someone can choose to sit with me.

So I'm standing in the doorway with my paper plate of salad and fried chicken in hand, scanning the room. Now, our church is very international. Many countries and languages represented here, but lots of Japanese members. I don't know them so well and I've always been bad with names. There are some newer people who seem a little odd and maybe are here mainly for the food, I don't really know. Not there. Many Spanish speakers, a few French. Some people who are very tight with their own friends, maybe. But I feel like an outsider. A very active, mission oriented couple who never seem to smile unless

they're talking to a witnessing contact. I'm not sitting with them. A couple of brothers who always talk politics. No.

There are, actually, only a few tables here I'd be comfortable sitting at. But what if spirit world, heaven or whatever you want to call it, isn't assigned seating? What if you are free to go anywhere you feel comfortable?

So if this church meeting room was heaven, I'd be stuck to a small part of it. And this is a room full of church folks. What about if I walked into a crowded steakhouse, or buffet? Could I sit at any table at all, with anyone there? Could I swing that? I mean, I've got a body and I can make myself go up to someone I feel pretty iffy about, and my feeling about them can change. But in the spirit world, I've got no physical body. Just my spirit self and maybe it's hard to force yourself to make moves there.

Maybe there's no miraculous transformation in spirit, maybe when you arrive, there you are. As you are on earth.

So my conclusion was, here was a good test, a wake up call, a way to check how free I'd be if I went up to the spirit world right now.

The same goes for where we sit in the chapel. We've got our favorite pew, close to the front so my wife can read the song lyrics on the screen. Same people around us every time. But how many people do I feel free to sit with here? Hmmm.

Freedom was a very popular subject when I was growing up, and it still is today. Usually people take it to mean 'nobody's telling me what to do'. Freedom from being told what you can and can't do. To do whatever you want. But what if freedom is being able to feel at home with any kind of person? In any kind of place?

I mean, if there's someone I can't stand, I have to leave when they show up, right? I can't be in the same place with them. Either they have to leave or I have to. How free is that? That's kind of hell, actually. This person can dictate where I go and don't go, all because I can't stand being around them.

Can you feel at home with someone who passionately disagrees with something you really believe in? Is there a side of town you just don't go to?

How about around young people, old people, people who yell and laugh a lot, people who never raise their voice. On the left, on the right, in the middle, poor, rich, middle, artistic, flexible, logical, rigid. All kinds of people in this world. Dramatic, boring. All kinds. How many different kinds of people you feel at home with, maybe that's how free you're going to be after you die. And this life here is short compared to life there.

Jesus knew where he was going. He loved his enemies. I guess I've got a ways to go if I want to be as free as him.