



# Links Players

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## Asbury Fire

*The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. (Isaiah 60:22).  
This is not a devotional. This is a testimony.*

In high school, my only sport was golf, and I could barely break 80. When I graduated in 1969, no college golf coach knew I was alive. Thus, I enrolled at a small school with no golf team, nearby Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky.

College life was rather normal until February 3, 1970, when a “spontaneous revival” erupted out of a chapel service. This lasted day and night for over a week and spread to the entire nation. Indeed, the sparks of Asbury’s fire reached all the way to the California hippie generation. Perhaps you’ve seen *The Jesus Revolution?* Tiny little Asbury is a spark in that story.

As for my personal story, I had skipped the Tuesday 10 am chapel where it all began. When I arrived for an 11 am class, I expected the normal crowd of thirty kids. But the room was empty. I wondered, “Has Jesus returned, and I am the only lost soul on campus?”

I followed some music to Hughes Auditorium and found my assigned chapel seat. It was quiet, but the air was thick with anticipation and reverence. Not one of the thousand students had left. This seemed like the center of the universe.

The action was around the “altar.” Students went to the front, prayed, wept, then went to the platform and testified to their experience. They confessed their sins. They asked for forgiveness from fellow students and faculty. They admitted to being phonies. They hugged and talked about being in love with Jesus. I wanted no part of this stuff, but I was still mesmerized in my seat.

A simple song explained it all: “There’s a Sweet Sweet Spirit in this Place.” This became a theme song. I am humming it even now.

About sixty hours into the revival, I knew it was my time. I located a friend and said, “I know you won’t believe this, but I am not a Christian.”

She smiled and said, “That’s no surprise. Five of your friends are in the basement now praying for you.” This was my moment -- one divine moment. I slithered to the altar, hoping no one would see me but also believing this was my life’s biggest moment. And sure enough, it happened. I experienced God. I wrestled with God, and He won.

He redeemed me. He washed me. He healed me.

Have you experienced this God? Many church members check a box or shake a pastor's hand to say "I believe"- but may have missed the experience of wrestling with God, like Jacob's experience in Genesis. Believe? Yes. But experience? Maybe not.

The God of the Bible is to be experienced, not just to be believed in. The 1970 revival was not a time of 'decision,' meaning a logical and well-thought-out process to decide to believe or follow Christ. Instead, it was an illogical, unplanned event when God offered Himself to us as a gift.

Now, 53 years later, this 'spontaneous revival' at Asbury has erupted AGAIN. Social media and regular news are full of Asbury stories. Go to YouTube and see for yourself.

So, the question for us is this- we know what revival looks like on a small Christian college campus in 1970 and 2023. But what would it look like for you- right now?

**Prayer: Lord, bring revival and let it start with me! Amen.**

—

Tim Philpot

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