

# **SISYPHUS AND THE WATCHDOG**

## **SEPTEMBER 2005**

Sisyphus was the founder and king of Corinth. He was known as being a very crafty fellow throughout his life but he saved his greatest triumph for last. When the god Hades came to claim him personally for the kingdom of the dead he brought a pair of handcuffs with him which at the time was a novelty. Sisyphus being true to his shrewd form asked all the right questions, and expressed such an interest in the handcuffs that Hades was persuaded to demonstrate their use on himself. That is how the god of the underworld Hades found himself locked in Sisyphus's closet for many days.

With Hades locked in a closet he couldn't perform his morbid duties of carting people off to the underworld, so the great chain of being was now seriously out of whack. For example: A soldier chopped to bits in battle that day would show up that evening at the taverna downing ouzo while munching on some calamari. With Hades, god of the underworld out of commission nobody could die. Eventually Hades was released and Sisyphus was ordered to the underworld for his eternal assignment, but Sisyphus the consummate trickster had other ideas.

Sneaky Sisyphus told his wife not to bury him; so, when he arrived in the underworld he complained to Persephone, Queen of the dead, that he had not been accorded the proper funeral honors. Even more, he pleaded that an unburied corpse had no business on the far side of the river Styx. His wife did not place a coin under his tongue to secure passage with Charon the ferryman. *"Surely her highness should realize that I must be given leave to return topside to make things right"*

Persephone agreed. Sisyphus made his way back to the beautiful land of grilled fish and sunshine, where he promptly forgot all about funerals, coins and promises and partied like it was 5000 BC. Unfortunately for Sisyphus the party eventually had to end and sure enough Hades hauled him back down where his tricks caught up to him. For a crime against the gods Sisyphus was condemned to an eternity of hard frustrating labor. His assignment was to roll a great boulder to the top of a hill. Only every time Sisyphus attained the summit, the boulder would roll back down again. Those gods certainly were tough.

Some days I really feel for Sisyphus and his never-ending frustration. Everyday we at Markowski Investments get up and perform the Sisyphean task of cleaning up Wall Street and helping individual investors. Don't get me wrong we all love what we do, helping and informing people is a wonderful way to make a living, but I have to admit elements of utter frustration and powerlessness do creep in to our business.

We talk with many individuals across the country week in and week out trying to put them on the right track. Some listen, some do not. Our job is very satisfying knowing that we have done everything and anything we can to help build lasting wealth for our clients and help them achieve their dreams. However, we do become terribly frustrated when we do everything and anything we can to warn investors about poor investment choices, whether it is in annuities, penny stocks, poor asset allocation, haphazard trading or many other poor investment decisions and we fail. We do not have the power of the gods, we cannot force people to listen to us, and many individuals turn a deaf ear to our warnings and recommendations. It is quite maddening for us to KNOW what the inevitable outcome is going to be for these investors, and be unable to help. Kind of like pushing a boulder up a hill and having it roll back down again...over and over.

I listen to recordings of my previous weeks radio show while I am working or in the car on the way to the gym or while picking up diapers or formula. It's a bit strange listening to oneself, especially

for me. In a constant effort to improve my performances for my listeners I am a very critical listener. One aspect of my performance that I have tried to correct for over five years now, to no avail, is my volume, in fact, I have given up trying. When talking about the various investment scams and rip-offs that we discuss weekly, I have a tendency to lose my temper and get very LOUD! Sorry about that folks, but that is not going to change. I get very hot and bothered when people are ripped off, but what really adds fuel to the fire in my frustration is that I have been talking essentially about the same scams and rip-offs for years. They may change form a little bit here and there but that is just Wall Street repackaging them. They are basically the same and like clockwork every story is subsequently ignored by every other media outlet. We keep pushing that rock, but it keeps rolling back down.

No matter what we do, what we report on, what we uncover, the rock rolls right back down to the bottom. We at Markowski Investments are knowingly fighting a losing battle against very powerful interests in downtown New York and their political protectors. Even though we know we are not going to win, the battle is still worth fighting. Every investor we help is another rock pushed to the top of the hill. We know there is going to be another one right behind it but it doesn't matter it is worth it. There is old saying... *"If you can't beat them, join them."*

Not us. We'll just keep pushing.