I. Preparation:
   a. Pray, Read
   b. Observe, Interpret, Apply (Inductive Study)
   c. Discuss, Discern, Be mindful of others.

II. The Audience, The Purpose, The Setting, The Great Themes
   a. Core Audience – Disciples;
   b. Purpose – Metanoia (Repentance/Transformation)
   c. Setting -- Mountain (Moses) – Teaching (Seated)
   d. Themes:
      i. Exodus and Easter,
      ii. A bias toward the bottom,
      iii. No correlation between gifts and worthiness,
      iv. Letting go. (Rohr, p. 124, Jesus’ Plan for a New World)

III. The Purpose, The Stairway, The Vision, The Options:
   a. The Purpose: The Beatitudes are not about high ideals, but about God’s gracious deliverance and our joyous participation. We believe that people have put too much emphasis on the virtues (poverty of spirit, purity of heart, peacemaking, and so on), and not enough emphasis on what Jesus was emphasizing – God’s presence, God’s active deliverance, God’s giving us a share in that deliverance, and so blessedness and joy. (David Gushee and Glen Stasson, Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context, p. 24)

   b. The Stairway: The first seven Beatitudes are the steps into the kingdom, the stairway to spiritual life. They are not disconnected “sayings,” but a definite whole with each step, or Beatitude, arranged progressively in order… We see, then, that these are not blessings pronounced upon different kinds of people – the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, and so on. Rather, they are stages in the experience of only one class of people – those who are entering the kingdom and who at each stage are blessed. The kingdom, of course, is the blessing. This blessedness comes with the taking of the step and is not postponed as a future reward. (Clarence Jordan, Sermon on the Mount, p. 9).
c. The Vision:
   i. A new image of reality that challenges conventional wisdom;
   ii. Diagnosis of the human condition (diagnosis is not the answer
       – Jesus lives the answer.
   iii. How transformation happens (transformation is not the same
       as change. Change is when something new begins. Transformation
       is the opposite – when something old falls away – often after a crises
       (Marcus Borg, Jesus a New Vision).

d. The Options:
   i. The old self on the old path: Non-conversion or non-enlightenment.
   ii. The old self on a new path: Where most religion begins and
       ends: new behavior, new language and practices that are
       sincere, but that underlying myth/worldview/motivation and
       goals is never really changed. My anger, fear and ego are
       merely transferred to now defend my idea of God or religion.
   iii. The new self on a new path: The total transformation of
       consciousness, worldview, motivation, rewards and goals that
       characterizes one who loves and is loved by God. This is
       conversion according to Jesus. (Rohr, Jesus’ Plan for a New
       World, p. 98.)

IV. Comparative look at Verses 1-2 Matthew 5:1-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You're Blessed</td>
<td>The Beatitudes</td>
<td>Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 1-2 When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside. Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said:</td>
<td>5 When Jesus[a] saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:</td>
<td>5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Beatitudes

He said:
Table 2.1 *The Beatitudes echo Isaiah 61*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isaiah 61:1, 2</th>
<th>Matthew 5:3-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;good news to the oppressed ... the year of the Lord's favor&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;to bind up the brokenhearted ... to comfort all who mourn&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;They will inherit a double portion in their land.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Blessed are the humble, for they shall inherit the earth.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;They will be called oaks of righteousness.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all nations.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Blessed are those who have been persecuted for ... righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From: "*Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context*" by David P. Gushee and Glen H. Stassen.